



# L I T E R A R Y *cavalcade*

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#### OUR FRONT COVER



C. W. Anderson (the in-  
itials stand for Clarence  
William) uses the litho-  
grapher's pencil to make  
horses come alive. He un-  
derstands horses and has  
loved them from his early  
days on the plains of  
Nebraska. Anderson's work  
has spirit and vitality,  
qualities difficult to convey  
in lithography. Even as a  
child he wanted to be an  
artist and he left the tiny  
town of Wahoo, Nebraska, where he was born  
in 1891, to study at the Art Institute of Chicago.  
His illustrations for books and magazines, and  
his portraits of famous horses, have won him  
recognition among artists and sportsmen. His  
works have been exhibited in every important  
print show for many years, and they have re-  
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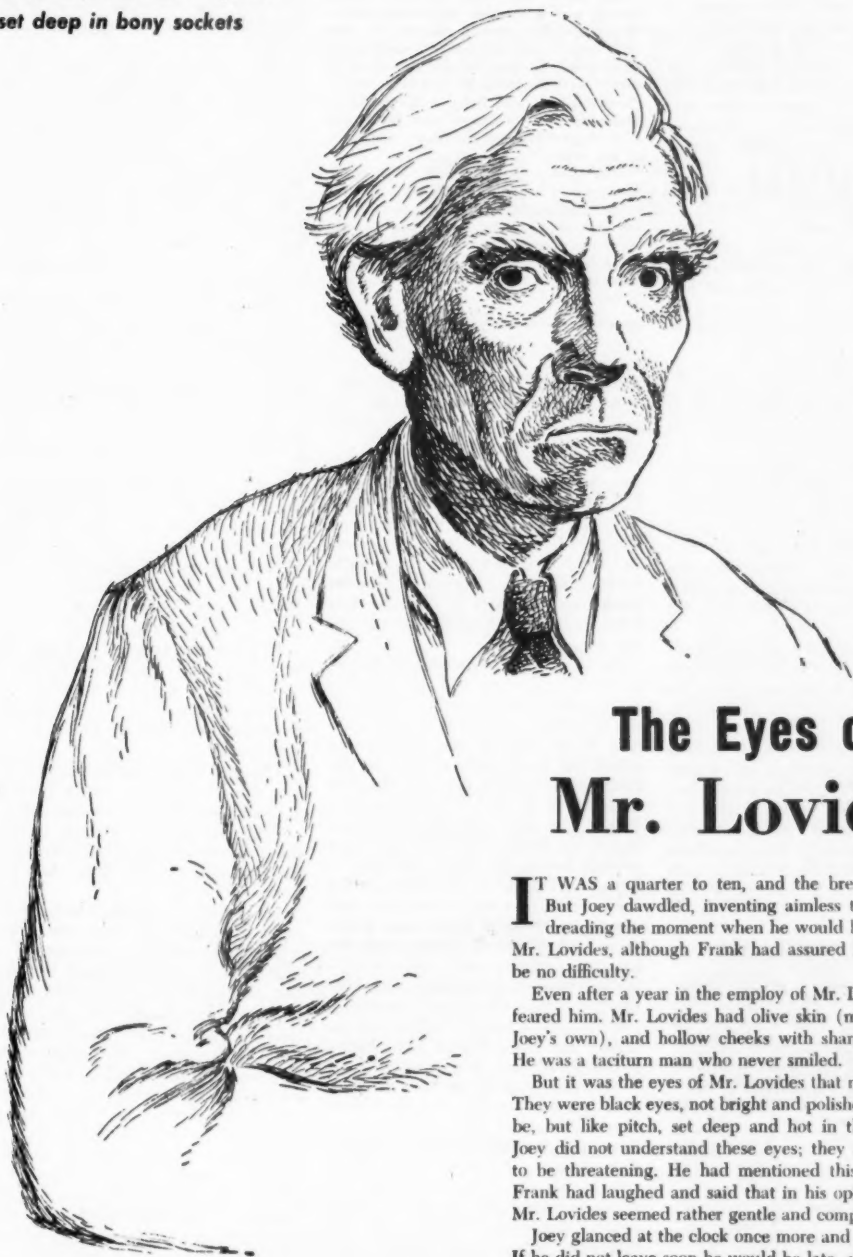
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*It was the eyes that made  
Joey afraid—black as pitch,  
set deep in bony sockets*



## The Eyes of Mr. Lovides

**I**T WAS a quarter to ten, and the breakfast was over. But Joey dawdled, inventing aimless tasks for himself, dreading the moment when he would have to approach Mr. Lovides, although Frank had assured him there would be no difficulty.

Even after a year in the employ of Mr. Lovides, Joey still feared him. Mr. Lovides had olive skin (much darker than Joey's own), and hollow cheeks with sharply etched lines. He was a taciturn man who never smiled.

But it was the eyes of Mr. Lovides that made Joey afraid. They were black eyes, not bright and polished as eyes should be, but like pitch, set deep and hot in the bony sockets. Joey did not understand these eyes; they appeared always to be threatening. He had mentioned this once to Frank. Frank had laughed and said that in his opinion the eyes of Mr. Lovides seemed rather gentle and compassionate.

Joey glanced at the clock once more and became panicky. If he did not leave soon he would be late, and the ceremony would be delayed.

He straightened his shoulders, wiped his moist hands on

By JOHN GODEY

NOVEMBER, 1949

his apron and walked forward on the slat platform to the cashier's desk at the front of the luncheonette. Mr. Lovides sat behind the desk, with a sheaf of statements and his big checkbook before him. He looked up at Joey.

Joey's gaze wavered before Mr. Lovides' flat stare. He wet his lips with his tongue and managed to blurt out, "Frank said he speak to you, ask you to let me off for his marriage. To be witness."

Mr. Lovides' lids flickered for a moment, concealing his eyes. "Be back by eleven thirty," he said.

Joey turned away quickly and went back to the kitchen. He dressed swiftly but with care, putting on the powder-blue suit with the thin stripes running through the cloth like rich veins of gold.

Mr. Lovides did not look up from the cashier's desk as he hurried by.

Joey waited impatiently on the el platform for a train. When it came, he took a seat beside a window.

The train moved rapidly in its halting, deceptively antiquated way, and in another ten minutes he would be there. The realization that he would soon be seeing Frank for the last time filled his eyes with sudden tears. He brushed them away angrily. A wedding day was not a day for tears, but for rejoicing.

Yet for Joey it was a day of sorrow. Without Frank he could not hope to hold the job of counterman. Soon he would be back in the sweaty kitchen again.

In the beginning he had not minded the dishwashing. He had left Puerto Rico only a week before he got the job. Any job was fine which would pay enough to live on, to buy the splendid, sharp clothing worn by his compatriots in the States. The trays heaped with soiled dishes were a heavy load. The

### About the author . . .

• Under his own name and two pseudonyms, John Godey has published three novels and a number of short stories. We asked him how he came to write "The eyes of Mr. Lovides." "I used to eat in a lunchroom like the one described in the story," he told us. "There was a Puerto Rican boy behind the counter. One day as I watched him bantering with the customers, the story unfolded in my mind."

Mr. Godey was born in New York City, where he lives and works. He has done newspaper reporting and for a number of years he wrote movie publicity for several film companies. During the war he was a master sergeant in the infantry. He is married and has one child, a daughter.

smells of the kitchen were sometimes overpowering. The hot, greasy dishwasher reddened and wrinkled his hands. But in spite of everything, it had seemed a fine job—then.

He could not now recall the first time Frank had spoken to him. Joey's English had been very poor then, and he would not have understood him anyway. But he did understand the friendly tone of Frank's voice and the warm smile of this tall counterman with the blond, unruly hair. It was the first friendliness he had encountered in the teeming, hostile city.

He cherished the countless instances of Frank's warmth and helpfulness—but the most memorable of all came on the day Ralph, the second counterman, quit. Frank went to Mr. Lovides and asked him to try Joey at the job. Mr. Lovides had at first been unwilling to do this, but he had much respect for Frank. The next morning Joey came out of the kitchen and took his place proudly behind the second counter.

Joey was polite and cheerful, and he soon built up his own circle of special customers. Many of them were girls—stenographers and file clerks from the big office buildings—who enjoyed making him blush by remarking on his long black eyelashes. Oh, it was a wonderful job. He was no longer a menial, an unskilled boy from Puerto Rico, but a personage of some importance. . . .

The train had come into the City Hall Station. Joey got out and went slowly down the stairs to the street. Even now, he found it hard to believe that Frank was going away, though he had known for a long time that his friend planned to be married and then return to his home in Worcester to live.

As Frank's last day at the luncheonette came closer, Joey had grown increasingly morose. He had even been rude to one of his regular customers.

Mr. Lovides had witnessed the incident. He said nothing, but the look in his eyes had burned fear into Joey's heart. The fear was still with him as he entered the building where Frank was waiting. . . .

The marriage didn't take long. A white-haired man intoned the phrases, while Frank and his girl looked at each other with glistening eyes. Frank and his new wife smiled at Joey warmly and insisted that he must come up to Worcester often to visit them. He stood there and nodded, his eyes filled with tears, the smile on his lips fixed and stiff. Then they were gone, and he walked back to the el and returned to the luncheonette.

His legs trembled as he opened the door and went in. His eyes picked out the wall clock: 11:25. He started toward the kitchen and then stopped, as abruptly as though he had come up against an invisible barrier. Behind the counter—the second counter, *his* counter—there was another man, wearing a fresh linen jacket.

For a long time, Joey stood still feeling the heat of unreleased tears behind his blinking lids. Nor did he move when Mr. Lovides came out of the kitchen and walked toward him.

He was only dimly aware of Mr. Lovides' voice: "Got a new man to work the second counter. . . ."

It happened already, so soon. The very day of Frank's departure he had become again a Puerto Rican boy of no consequence, fit only for the kitchen, the greasy suds. Without Frank, he was nothing.

The eyes of Mr. Lovides drilled into him, but his voice was lost in the roaring that filled Joey's ears. A wave of self-pitying resentment surged up in him. But suddenly Mr. Lovides' voice penetrated Joey's anguish. Joey stared at him in disbelief.

Mr. Lovides, somewhat impatiently, repeated himself: "So from now on you work the first counter. Understand?"

He could not trust himself to reply. He nodded his head in mute, overwhelming happiness. Now he could bear the going away of Frank, now he could bear anything that might come. He was no longer an alien, but a man who could stand alone, in confidence and pride. He had lost much today, when Frank had gone away. But he had gained even more than he had lost.

Before starting for the kitchen, Joey looked directly into the eyes of Mr. Lovides. They were gentle, compassionate eyes, and he was astonished that he could ever have feared them.

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## On practical jokes and some jokers

SIXTEEN years ago John P. Medbury, then conducting a syndicated column of humor, stopped in to visit the offices of the *Denver Post* and stayed three or four weeks. Mr. Medbury had a large Lincoln automobile which he used in traveling aimlessly around the country. He usually wore a pullover sweater, linen pants, sports shoes, and no hat. I was a runny-nosed reporter on the *Post* and I attached myself to this journalistic celebrity, trailing him around and fastening myself on him with the tenacity of a sheep tick.

One afternoon Mr. Medbury and I walked down Champa Street in Denver and I turned in at a drugstore to get some cigarettes. Mr. Medbury, bare of head and wearing his white pants, followed me into the store and stood off to one side while I transacted my business.

An inoffensive-appearing citizen walked up to Mr. Medbury, believing him to be an employee of the store.

"I want to get a toothbrush," said the customer.

Mr. Medbury just stood there and looked the man stonily in the eye. Slowly the expression on his face altered. He stared at the customer as a man might stare at a lifelong friend and business partner who has just confessed embezzling a million dollars.

Finally Mr. Medbury spoke.

"What did you say?"

"I said I want to get a toothbrush," replied the customer.

Again the long stare, and Mr. Medbury began shaking his head from side to side.

"Did you say *toothbrush*?" he demanded.

"Yes!" came back the customer, growing irritated. "I said toothbrush. I want

# Toothbrushes and Scalp Tonic

By H. ALLEN SMITH

to get a toothbrush. Anything wrong with that?"

"My friend," said Mr. Medbury, "you ask me if there is anything wrong with it. Man! Have you taken leave of your senses?"

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded the citizen, hot anger struggling with complete confusion in his breast.

Mr. Medbury leaned forward, glaring into the customer's face.

"I mean," he said, "that you belong in a nut house. Coming in here and asking for a toothbrush! I suppose you're now going to tell me that you have hair growing on your teeth and that you've got to brush it. Right?"

The customer's eyes bulged. He stammered, fumbled for words, then came out with:

"I demand to see the manager!"

"Listen, you poor, deluded moron," Mr. Medbury said. "I'm the manager. Now, get out of here before I call the loonywagon! Toothbrush, indeed!"

The customer seemed suddenly stricken with terror. He turned quickly and went out the door at top speed.

I caught a brief glimpse of Mr. Med-

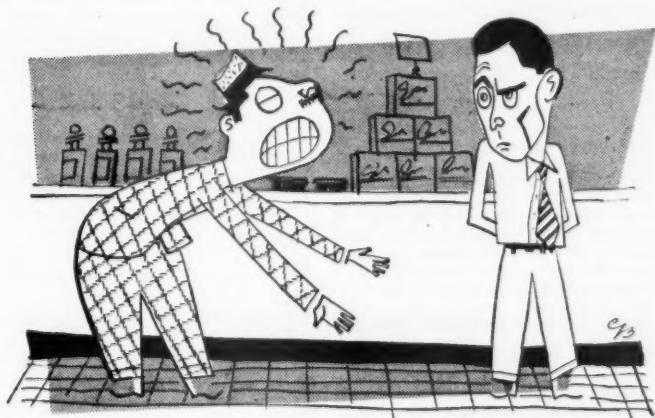
bury a few years later at a World Series game in Philadelphia, and the next time I saw him was in Hollywood where he now lives, writing for the movies and radio. I began hearing stories about his unusual parties.

Once Mr. and Mrs. Medbury decided to have in a bevy of friends to celebrate John's birthday. They made up a list of thirty guests. Fifteen of these were people who love nothing better than formal dress. Given the opportunity to put on dinner clothes, they have achieved paradise. The Medburys sent invitations to them, specifying that the party was to be informal—that they should come in sports clothes. The remaining fifteen were people who loathe formal dress, wearing slacks and sweat shirts wherever possible. The invitations to these people stressed the point that the Medbury party would be rigidly formal—white tie.

Mrs. Medbury went to an employment agency for a one-day butler and got a pip, complete with proper clothes and a British accent. Next came the food problem. Mrs. Medbury was at the moment lacking a regular cook. She remembered that the wife of her Italian gardener had a high reputation for making spaghetti. She engaged this lady and turned her loose in the kitchen.

The guests arrived, and from the beginning waves of bitterness coursed through the house. The guests in dinner clothes were furious and the guests in sports clothes were furious. The Medburys scurried around feigning sorrow, mumbling, "Really, there's been a mistake somewhere." The highbrow butler, bewildered at first, grew sullen and then outraged over this travesty on good breeding. The climax came when the sulking guests heard a mighty uproar from the kitchen. The unhappy butler,

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determined to retain his own sense of superiority, had made the error of telling the Italian lady how to make spaghetti. The Italian lady had told him to mind his own business. The butler ordered her to obey his dictates. Whereupon the Italian lady let go at him with forty miles of spaghetti, splattering him with it until she had emptied a heaping dishpan of the stuff. There was spaghetti on the ceiling and on the walls, from one end of the kitchen to the other. It was one of the loveliest parties the Medburys ever gave.

Mr. Medbury is but one of several thousand pranksters inhabiting Hollywood. Practical joking seems to be a part of studio life. A man with a midget automobile (and there are many of them) had best anchor the thing firmly or put it in his locker, else he is likely to find it occupying the cross-tree of a telephone pole when he goes to get it.

The foolery on the sets is never-ending. Suppose there's a scene in which Ray Milland eats a cheese sandwich. He bites into it. The cheese is cold cream. Or suppose Bob Hope goes into an extended speech before the camera and during the shot he picks up a glass of water and takes a gulp. The water may contain alum, which puckers the mouth.

One of the town's most celebrated leading men has a small gag which he uses frequently. He comes up behind his victim. He dips his fingers in a glass of water. He flips the water onto the back of the victim's neck and, simultaneously, lets go with a big sneeze. He is still alive at this writing.

**I**F I seem to concern my self overmuch with stories of practical jokes it is because of the pure perversity of the people I know, and because I once had a newspaper assignment which required my spending a month collecting stories about famous pranks. Many of the practical jokers I know about should be hanged; yet there are others whose feats I almost admire. I recall the story of Waldo Peirce and the turtle. Mr. Peirce, celebrated in later years as a painter, once made his home in Paris. The wife of the concierge (French for orchestra leader) at his hotel grew fond of him and was constantly going out of her way to do him little kindnesses. As a gesture of appreciation Mr. Peirce brought home a present for her—a tiny turtle about the size of his thumbnail.

She was vociferously fond of that wonderful turtle and made all manner of French noises petting it and babying it and constructing a little house for it.

After a few days Mr. Peirce came home with another turtle, a size larger than the original, and secretly made a

substitution. The lady was aglow with happiness. Her pet was thriving under her care, growing rapidly. A couple of days after that the turtle took on more size. Mr. Peirce continued to fetch in larger and larger turtles unknown to the lady, and before long she had a turtle as big as a flat hog. The beast was all but driving her out of her home, yet she was blissfully contented, overjoyed in the knowledge that her diligence had brought glowing health to the creature.

Then came the decline. The turtle started growing smaller. Day by day it continued to shrink until it was back to its original size, and the poor woman almost started wasting away herself worrying over what she supposed to be a sort of miraculous illness. I don't know whether Mr. Peirce ever told her the truth.

**I**CAN'T resist putting down the story of Leon Kay's revenge. Leon is at this moment somewhere in the Middle East, serving the United Press. He is an old friend of mine though I have not seen much of him since 1935 when he was sent to London. He could handle half a dozen languages and in the years just before the war he worked at a desk in the UP London bureau.

Soon after his arrival he sent a suit of clothes out to be cleaned. Something like two weeks elapsed before it came back, and when it did come, all the buttons were off the coat, trousers, and vest. It appears that the English cleaners remove all the buttons before cleaning a suit and, when they return it, they also return a small bag containing the buttons. This quaint custom struck Leon Kay as being uncivilized, impractical, and insane. In fact, it made him angry, and he swore that he'd get revenge on the English race if the opportunity ever came.

He worked the lobster trick on Satur-

### About the author . . .

● H. Allen Smith is a former newspaperman who found that his writing was funny and grabbed a stranglehold on American humor. Lucky for us, he won't let go. Each book that laughs its way out of his typewriter is even funnier than its predecessor. In 1929, at the age of 21, he landed in New York with a lone \$10 bill. Within two days he was hired by the United Press as a feature writer. Later he joined the N. Y. *World-Telegram*, where he built a reputation as the "screwball's Boswell." Smith's formal schooling was rather meagre. He insists that he really got his education in newspaper offices and from books that he read after he was old enough to read with real appreciation.

day nights and amused himself through the dull hours by reading the letters-to-the-editor section of the *Sunday Times*. This London paper devoted acres of space to such letters. A reader would write in to report that he had sighted a water pipit, which is a form of bird, in a certain neighborhood. His letter would bring perhaps fifty others from people who reported that they, too, had seen water pipits, people who said they had not seen any water pipits and people who said they hoped they would see some water pipits.

**O**N ONE Saturday night Leon was reading a long series of letters to the *Times* discussing remedies for baldness. As he read he was eating a cottage pudding brought in by the office boy from a neighboring restaurant.

Suddenly Leon transferred his attention from the printed page to the pudding. It was a frightful blob of seal-brown stuff containing a scattering of raisins. Leon contemplated its unlovely texture for a bit, then a fine idea smote him.

That week end he searched through British cookbooks until he found the recipe for the pudding. Then he wrote a scholarly letter to the *Times*. He described himself as a person who had recently made the acquaintance of an old inhabitant of Kent, and this old inhabitant of Kent had given him a sovereign remedy for baldness. It worked wonders on the scalps of Kentish people, wherefore there was no reason to suppose it would not work wonders on the scalps of people elsewhere. After that Leon set down the recipe for the pudding.

"Please note," his letter concluded, "the presence of the raisins in this decoction. We know that raisins contain a plenitude of iron. Can it be that this iron is the essential element, the fertilizing ingredient, in the remarkable salve? I would greatly enjoy hearing from other *Times* readers who may have had experience with this Kentish elixir."

The *Sunday Times*, to be sure, printed it. There were responses. Several correspondents wrote in with long and learned discussions on raisins and their possible effect on follicles. One colossal liar said that he had heard tell of this noggin lotion and was aware of its efficacy.

Leon Kay was satisfied. His revenge for the button incident was complete. Even now I imagine he sometimes chuckles when he thinks of the many elderly gentlemen throughout the British Isles who, at this very moment, may be solemnly kneading cottage pudding—raisins and all—into their glistening scalps.

**A story-teller steals a peep  
behind the curtain of history**

THE story of Archimedes did not happen quite in the way that it has been written. It is true that he was killed when the Romans conquered Syracuse, but it is not correct that a Roman soldier burst into his house to plunder it and that Archimedes, absorbed in drawing a geometrical figure, growled at him crossly: "Don't spoil my circles!" For one thing, Archimedes was not an absent-minded professor; on the contrary, he was by nature a thorough soldier who invented engines of war for the Syracusans for the defense of the city; for another thing, the Roman soldier was not a drunken plunderer but the educated and ambitious staff centurion Lucius, who knew to whom he had the honor of speaking. He saluted on the threshold and said: "Greeting, Archimedes."

Archimedes raised his eyes from the wax tablet on which he was drawing something and said: "What is it?"

"Archimedes," said Lucius, "we know that without your engines of war Syracuse wouldn't have held out for a month; as it is, we have had our hands full with it for two years. Don't imagine that we soldiers don't appreciate that. They're magnificent engines. My congratulations."

Archimedes waved his hand. "Please don't, they're really nothing. Just ordinary mechanisms for throwing projectiles—mere toys. From a scientific point of view they have no great importance."

"But from a military one they have," said Lucius. "Listen, Archimedes, I have come to ask you to work with us."

"With whom?"

"With us, the Romans. After all, you must know that Carthage is on the decline. What is the use of helping her? We shall soon have the Carthaginians on the run, you'll see. You'd better join us, all of you."

"Why?" growled Archimedes. "We Syracusans happen to be Greeks. Why should we join you?"

"Because you live in Sicily, and we need Sicily."

"And why do you need it?"

"Because we want to be masters of the Mediterranean."

"Aha," said Archimedes, and stared reflectively at his tablet. "And why do you want that?"

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# The Death of Archimedes

By KAREL CAPEK

Translated by Dora Round



"Whoever is master of the Mediterranean," said Lucius, "is master of the world. That's clear enough."

"And must you be masters of the world?"

"Yes. The mission of Rome is to become master of the world. And I can tell you, that's what Rome is going to be."

"Possibly," said Archimedes and erased something on his tablet. "But I wouldn't advise it, Lucius. Listen, to be master of the world—some day that's going to give you an awful lot of defending to do. It's a pity, all the trouble you're going to have with it."

"That doesn't matter; we shall be a great empire."

"A great empire," murmured Archimedes. "If I draw a small circle or a large circle, it's still only a circle. There are still frontiers—you will never be without frontiers, Lucius. Do you think that a large circle is more perfect than a small circle? Do you think you are a greater geometrician if you draw a larger circle?"

"You Greeks are always juggling with arguments," objected the centurion. "We have another way of proving that we are right."

"How?"

"By action. For instance, we have conquered your Syracuse. Ergo, Syracuse belongs to us. Is that a clear proof?"

"Yes," said Archimedes and scratched his head with his stylo. "Yes, you have conquered Syracuse; only it is not and never will be the same Syracuse as it was before. Why, it used to be a great and famous city; now it will never be great again. Poor Syracuse!"

"But Rome will be great. Rome has got to be stronger than anyone else in the whole world."

"Why?"

"To keep up her position. The stronger we are, the more enemies we have. That is why we must be the strongest."

"As for strength," murmured Archimedes, "I'm a bit of a physicist, Lucius, and I'll tell you something. Force absorbs itself."

"What does that mean?"

"It's just a law, Lucius. Force which is active absorbs itself. The stronger you are, the more of your strength you use up that way; and one day a time will come—"

"What were you going to say?"

"Oh, nothing. I'm not a prophet, Lucius; I'm only a physicist. Force absorbs itself. I know no more than that."

"Listen, Archimedes, wouldn't you like to work with us? You have no idea what tremendous possibilities would open out for you in Rome. You would build the strongest war machines in the world—"

"Forgive me, Lucius; I'm an old man and I should like to work out one or two of my ideas. As you see, I am just drawing something here."

"Archimedes, aren't you attracted by the idea of winning world mastery with us?—Why don't you answer?"

"I beg your pardon," grunted Archimedes, bending over his tablets. "What did you say?"

"That a man like you might win world mastery."

"Hm, world mastery," said Archimedes in a bored tone. "You mustn't be offended, but I've something more important here. Something more lasting, you know. Something which will really endure."

"What's that?"

"Mind! Don't spoil my circles! It's the method of calculating the area of a segment of a circle."

Later it was reported that the learned Archimedes had lost his life through an accident.

## About the author . . .

● Karel Capek (CHOP-ek) was a Czech novelist, dramatist, essayist, and journalist who died in 1938 at the age of 48. He was a close friend of Thomas Masaryk, first president of Czechoslovakia. When the new state was created in 1918 Capek worked to build a democratic nation. He is best known for his plays, *R.U.R.*, and *The World We Live In*, which preach a sermon while they tell a story. The present essays are published now for the first time in English.

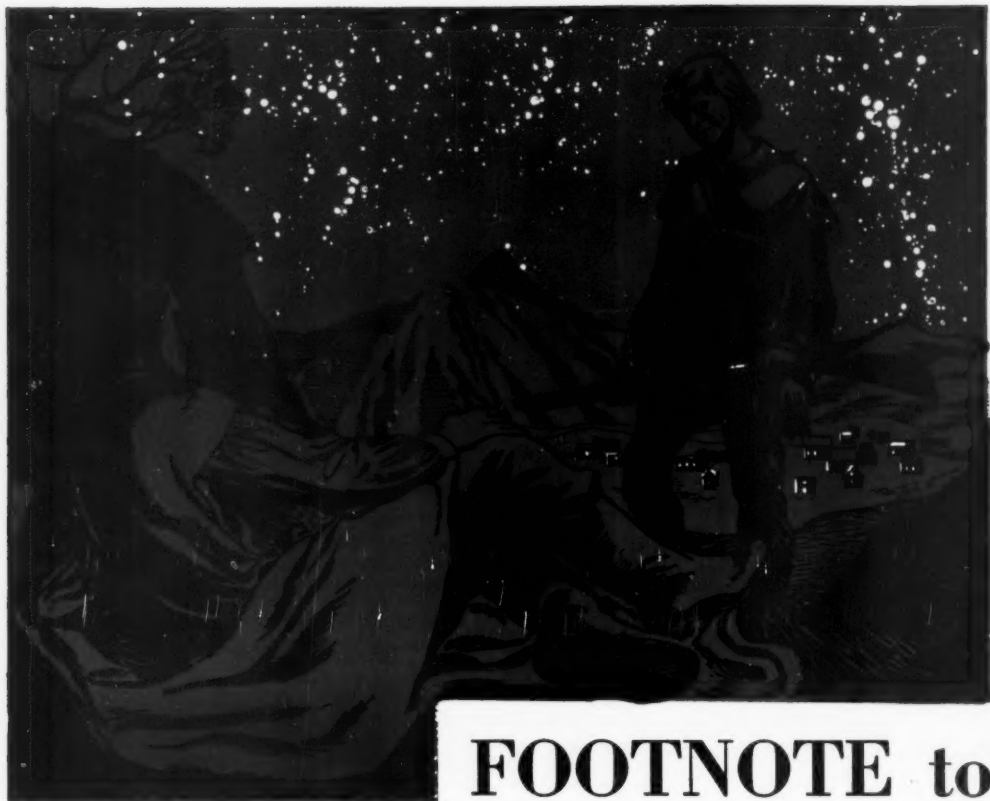


Illustration by Katherine Churchill Tracy

## FOOTNOTE to

By RODERICK LULL

**I**T'S TRUE, of course, that millions of words have been written by knowing people about how this country was built, and why. Many of them are fine and stirring words, too, full of the vigor of the great past, and sometimes they deal in detail with the impulses that made the pioneers accept the risks and the hardships and do what they did. But the thing my great-grandfather told me I have never seen in print, and that is why I put it down here. I know it to be a true thing, for I had the old gentleman's word for it, that winter he died. And he was known to everyone as a truthful man.

It could be said that he was so very old that his memory could not be trusted. And that would be reasonable

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enough if he had been talking of yesterday or last month or last year. He had little memory for the recent past, and when someone mentioned it he would look past them, chewing his pipe stem, his long white moustaches sagging. But the deep past, now, was a different matter. You could say, for instance, "Was it the early spring of '88 that you were in the big storm?" and he was a changed man. He'd take his pipe out of his mouth, and his moustaches would rise up as if there were little springs hidden in them, and he'd start talking in the big, booming voice that didn't weaken until the very end. Then it would come out, the people and the places and the events, all of it clear and living in his mind.

And now about this thing that happened to him.

The first time, he wasn't sure whether it had really happened or he'd just dreamed it. That was when he was trying to decide whether he'd light out

for the West or not. There he was, all full of stories about Indians and the Oregon Trail and the California gold rush and the rest of it. There were new stories filtering in about a place called the Comstock, where precious metals were as common as fieldstones in Connecticut. And on the other hand he had a fine home to live in and a splendid future all laid out for him and a girl he loved. He had a taste for the comforts of life and a few of the luxuries too, and those are not easy things to throw to the winds. He was twenty years old and his father was up there among the three or four most prominent citizens of the town, and he hadn't a real problem on earth.

He'd talked it over with his father. His father was wise enough to take it coolly. He was a stubborn man himself and he understood a stubborn son when he saw one. He just said, "There's a thousand men who fail for the one man who strikes it rich."



"But there's always that one man."

His father looked out of the window of the bank, at the wide street with its double line of fine shade trees. "And there's Martha Stewart."

"I'd be coming back for her one day, of course."

His father looked at the Seth Thomas clock that kept time like a ship's chronometer. "Some come back and some don't. Some live and some die, and for the most part no one ever hears of the ones who die. And then, some girls get tired of waiting when there are eligible young men around. Some girls want a husband and a home and no folderol. The Stewarts aren't the gambling kind, I'm happy to say."

He was properly respectful when his mother had her say, but he paid it little mind—women were all the same when it came to these affairs. He didn't talk it over with Martha just yet—there was no sense in making needless trouble when he wasn't sure himself. After all, it was a good town, and he'd be a big man in it. Home was a fine place, comfortable as they come. And, to frost the cake, there was no prettier or more loving girl than Martha Stewart.

Then here he was, lying half-awake in the middle of the night, when this man appeared. The man was dressed outlandishly for modern New England

*He was broke and he couldn't bear to go home a failure;  
but there was no shame in failure,  
there was shame only in the acceptance of defeat*

argue. "I'm sorry, but so it is. Write to us when you can, and if you need anything tell me."

His mother cried, but that was to be expected of a woman. Martha wept only a little and when he said, "I'll be back; I don't know when but I'll be back," she said at once, "I'll wait." So he kissed her with sadness—for she was lovely and many men wanted her—and said good-by.

He took the three thousand dollars an aunt had left him, and off he started for the Comstock, for all the accounts had said that a half-hundred new millionaires were made there each day and a full hundred on holidays.

There were many means of travel even in those days, and he used them all—trains and covered wagons and river boats and driving horses and riding horses and his own two feet. He listened and kept his mouth shut and learned a little. He saw deserts and forests and the mountains of the Far West that made all other mountains of his

Russell, and he gave good advice. "Take my tip, Hanford. Wealth isn't as easily made here as some will tell you. Watch your company. Hold tight to whatever money you have. Trust no one. That may be cynical, but you'll find it sound. Remember that an honest face may hide a thieving soul."

"I intend to, sir. I've been about a bit."

"Good!" Will Russell shook his hand. "Perhaps we'll meet here again—this is as good a restaurant as any, bad as the food is. Right now I've got some business to attend to. My associates and I have title to a vein—but never mind."

Well, my great-grandfather always brought this little story to a quick close. In a week he was one of Will Russell's associates, putting in the twenty-six hundred dollars he had left. And in ten days Will Russell was gone like a vagrant wind, and all any of the associates had to show for their money were some legal-looking deeds as worthless as the sage brush that grew everywhere.

My great-grandfather slept that night in a burrow some miles out of town. He ate stale bread and looked at his spavined riding horse. He knew he had to go home and tell them he'd thrown away three thousand dollars and the best part of a year of time and was all done with folly. Even to think of it put the taste of gall in his mouth.

And then it happened again, in the middle of the night.

This man appeared out of nowhere, and he wasn't dressed in furs. He had on old buckskins and you could tell he was a marksman by the fine, easy way he carried his rifle. When he talked you knew at once that he was a man of no schooling at all, but there was the kind of confidence in his voice that made you listen.

"Hanford," the man said, and he drawled quite a little. "I been cleaned out too, and it ain't a thing you like to think about. The money ain't important, but being a fool is. But then, a man's got to pay for what he gets to know, and mostly the price is fair enough. What a man don't have to do, Hanford, is give up easy. Not when there's much to do and see."

The man bit himself off a chew of tobacco, and then he said a queer thing. "You know what I done, Hanford? Why, one time I sat on my horse

## American History

—in worn Northern furs, with heavy boots, and a tasseled fur cap on his head. Another queer thing was the man's voice and manner of speaking—it seemed out of date, and not in tune with the times.

"You know, George Hanford," the man said, "it was a fine home I left too, but I had to see what was out there. And it was well worth the seeing, mighty well worth the seeing. Believe me or not as you please, but there's more wonderful sights out there than any man can describe to you in talk or in type. Let me tell you, George Hanford. . . ."

The man was there for maybe a minute, maybe an hour, maybe the best part of the night—my great-grandfather could never be sure. But the man was dressed all in furs, and that was a fact, and his voice made you think of history.

He gave it straight to his father the next day. "I'm going. I want to see what it looks like out there."

And his father, being wise, didn't

experience seem like something built by children. After a long time he came into Virginia City, where the millionaires were made.

It was an odd place. Nothing grew except the sage brush, and there were pits and shafts everywhere, as if thousands of giant moles had been working without rest for years. Men lived in shanties and tents and coyote holes, and it cost a dollar to spend a night on a bunk in a reeking room with twenty others. But there was talk of gold and silver on all sides, and men spoke casually of fortunes of a size almost unknown in New England. In an eating place he met a big, laughing, open-faced man named Will Russell, who was a mining engineer from St. Louis.

"Excuse me," Will Russell said, "but aren't you one of the Lees of Virginia? There's a marvelous family resemblance."

"No, sir. I'm George Hanford from Connecticut."

He was a friendly man, was Will



and I fixed me a fishing rod with a tree branch and a piece of string. And I caught me a nice trout out of a stream that's the nearest thing to ice that flows. And then—never leaving my horse, mind you, Hanford—I just let my trout drop into a boiling pool on the other side of the trail. And I took him out and I et him, just sitting there in the saddle. You believe that, Hanford?"

My great-grandfather wasn't exactly sure whether he answered or not. He kind of thought he did, saying, "Yes, I've heard of that—in the Yellowstone. But most people wouldn't believe it."

"Most people don't matter," the man said. "Anyhow, you might think of what I told you, Hanford. All of us has been tricked one time or another. But we live to laugh about it. We know how luck runs—here today and gone tomorrow. And in the meantime there's some amazing things to see and plenty to do." With that he was gone himself.

My great-grandfather was glad and in a way grateful for what the man had said to him, though, under the circumstances, it didn't perk him up as much as it might have. But it gave him a little something to think about besides his own troubles. He didn't think it particularly queer that these strangers should come by and have a word with him now and then. After all, as anybody knows, queer things happen to people all the time.

Well, there he was, broke as a man can be, in a rough, uncivilized country. But it could have been worse. He had a knack for making friends with people, he wasn't above work, and he got along. Too, he never felt sorry for himself, and that helped out in the pinches. He was an hostler for a time in a livery stable, and that taught him much about horses. He worked as a clerk in an assay office, and he learned things about metals and mines and claims he'd never known before. He was a handyman at a gambling hall—a thing that would have turned his father green as the fields of Ireland had he known it—and that gave him a new insight into people. And once, for a while, he was a professional letter writer, just like they have in China. Writing these letters for hire, he told me, taught him more about people than anything else he'd ever done, and he wouldn't have missed the opportunity for anything.

At long intervals he wrote and received letters himself. In his letters he said only that everything was going well, and he would be home for a visit one day. And the letters that came to him brought news of home, and sometimes it saddened him to see through the spare lines the people and the places he had left behind. But he was

never homesick in the ordinary fashion.

"Because," he said to me, "I had had a choice and I had done what it was necessary for me to do. Home was a fine place to love and remember, but it wasn't the place for me."

Sometimes there was a letter from Martha Stewart, and she sent him her affections. He carried her picture in a locket, but he rarely looked at it. The picture he had of her in his mind was clearer and handsomer by far.

Well, it would take too long to trace his travels, and I have forgotten much of what he told me when he was a very old man and I was not yet a man at all. He saw the frontier towns of Kansas, and San Francisco and Santa Barbara and Santa Fe. He hunted buffalo and he fished the great trout from the streams. And, for a while, there was a girl in the Southwest.

IT WAS a pleasant life, and she was a fine, affectionate girl. But she just wasn't the girl for him, and that was no one's fault. And it was time to think seriously of going home.

The trouble was, of course, that he couldn't bear to go back a failure. He'd gotten along well enough, but he'd never come anywhere near to making a strike. He sweated pounds off himself going over it from start to finish and back again, and of course he got nowhere. The thought of walking into his father's house dressed like a roustabout with hardly a half-dozen coins to rattle together in his pocket was enough to keep him awake at night.

It began to look as if this pride of his would never let him go home. Then one night another stranger appeared, and this man, in some ways, was the most remarkable of them all.

He was slim, and not very tall, but he carried himself in an imperial manner, like a man who had known royalty and would be at home at a court. He wore a circle of metal over his chest, like armor, and there was a sword at his side. When he spoke it was with a French accent, and he was clearly a man of education and position.

"Monsieur," he said, "I, too, knew failure, Monsieur. I knew it when I reached the Ohio and my men deserted me, and I had to return alone. I knew it when I sent the little vessel *Griffon* back to the settlements, and nothing was ever seen of her again. I knew it when I mistook an inlet for the mouth of the Mississippi. Oh, I knew many failures, Monsieur, and they were bitter."

His manner was polite, my great-grandfather said, but his voice was

strong and hard. My great-grandfather, of course, said nothing, and just listened. Finally the Frenchman said, nervously raising and lowering the sword in its scabbard, "There is no shame in failure, Monsieur. There is shame only in the acceptance of defeat." And those were the very last words he spoke.

The next morning my great-grandfather started for Connecticut. It wasn't the Frenchman's doing, he assured me; he'd undoubtedly have gone anyway, though he might have stayed a while longer in the sunshine. But the Frenchman sort of cleared things up and spurred him along.

He walked into the bank late one afternoon, dirty, in need of a shave, with his old clothes travel-stained, and nothing to show for all the time he'd been away except the pictures he had in his mind that no one else could see. His father got up from his desk and came to meet him as casually as if he'd been away on a week's trip to Boston or Philadelphia. He held out his hand and said, "Glad to see you, George."

That night my great-grandfather dressed in some of his old clothes—though they were terribly tight at the neck and shoulders and chest—and went to see Martha Stewart. He knew when he saw her eyes why she hadn't married in all this time, for all of her suitors. He knew it twice over when she kissed him and wept just the proper amount on his shoulder.

That night a curious thing happened. He made a quick movement, and his coat tore when the muscles strained at the thread and the cloth. Martha heard the sound and saw the tear, and her eyes widened. "Why, you've grown, George!"

"Yes," my great-grandfather said, and they laughed together.

So there he was back at home, with everyone glad to see him, and no one with a condescending word. He didn't make any promises, but he had to do something with his time so he went into his father's bank. There was a great deal he hadn't yet seen and meant to see—a whole continent full of strange and various things—but he wasn't in a hurry. And Martha Stewart, for one, never seemed to tire of listening to his stories of the West. When he stopped talking, she led him on with questions, and in time she heard almost all of it. There were, of course, a few things he left out.

"Martha would have understood, I'm sure," my great-grandfather said. "But a story-teller must always delete something. Knowing what to leave in and what to take out is the art of it, as you'll learn for yourself some day."

George Hanford and Martha Stewart were married in a fieldstone church that was older by far than the United States itself, and that had nothing in common with the unpainted frame churches he'd seen in the West. A little later he became cashier of the bank, a man with an assured future.

Well, it was a good life. No man ever made a happier marriage, and no place was more ordered or more beautiful than Connecticut. Sometimes, of course, he thought he'd like to trade a part of the order for something rough and vital and new. But those moods passed, and became fewer as the years went by.

He read a good deal, because it was the next best thing to seeing the world with your own eyes. And now and then someone would come along who'd been to far corners of the nation, and there'd be an hour or so of talk. He'd break out the cigars and the cider and listen carefully and ask his questions. Some of the travelers had been to places he'd once seen for himself, and it was amazing how much they had changed in what seemed a very short time. There was nothing static in the new country. It was forever in a state of flux, going this way and that by turns, until sooner or later it settled down into a natural pattern. It made him a little sorry to hear of the great changes, just as it makes a man sorry to hear that the home of his youth has been torn down, but that was the way it had to be.

When the travelers had gone, my great-grandfather would draw on his cigar and lean back in his deep rocker and look out of the windows with their clean white curtains and see the quiet street with its fine shade trees. Everything was ordered, just as it should be!

"Well," he'd say to Martha, "I had my look around when I was the right age for it, and here I am, where I belong." And it was true. He was a settled man in a settled town, and he had no complaint whatsoever.

The children came, three in six years. The oldest died, and it took a long while even to dull the sorrow. Little by little, the old days and the old thoughts got farther away from him, and that was all to the good. He had a hard time even remembering what the places had looked like, and the memory of Will Russell, the mining engineer from St. Louis, dimmed to a small dark shadow. And the strange men who had come, at long intervals, to talk with him in the night never came any more. It made him smile to think of them now, and he never told anyone else, not even Martha, about them.

Not until he told me, long after.

It was the homesteaders going out to the Dakotas, to what some people

called the country of the straddle-bug, who made all the trouble.

They took an interest in the migration at the bank, because if the reports were true or even half-true the homesteaders were going to make a great new empire out there, and there'd be wheat crops such as the world had never known before. My great-grandfather talked money and finance with the other bankers, but with only a small part of his mind at work. He was thinking about the endless prairie, and about the way the ducks came down the flyways in their millions, obscuring the sun for days on end, and about how when you blazed a trail with a wagon



### About the author . . .

● Roderick Lull was born and raised in San Francisco, but for many years he has lived in and about Portland, Oregon, where he is associated with a public-relations firm. He spent four years in the Army, both in this country and the Pacific, as an Infantry officer and later in the public relations section of the Army Air Forces in Manila. "This," he tells us, "was a very soft touch indeed. Rarely have so many had so little to do." He has been writing for many years and has contributed to numerous magazines. In 1942 he had a novel published. "I hope to gird up my strength," he says, "and start another one soon."



you were going where no other white man had ever gone in all history. The bones of the vanished buffalo were there, men said, and the bones of great elk lay beside them.

He was thinking too of the little towns that would be growing up, and of the little stores and banks and newspapers the land-seekers would need to help them build their empire. He was no farmer himself, but he knew what farmers had to have.

And then, he was thinking mostly that here was a new world, bigger than all New England, and people who weren't afraid of new, strange things were thronging into it.

All this he thought and none of it he said. For he was past the right age for adventuring: he was a settled man in a settled place.

So he read what he could find and he listened to travelers when they came his way and he told himself he was perfectly content. Oh, there was a restlessness all right, but that is a natural thing and only fools let it move them. He told himself that, time and time

again, and he was perfectly content.

And then, spoiling it all, this stranger came to him in the middle of the night, just as in the long past times, and he was different from all the rest.

My great-grandfather could never remember clearly just what kind of clothes he was dressed in, though they were queer in some fashion—a mixture of pioneer's and hunter's and politician's clothes, if you can conceive of that combination. He spoke with a Tennessee accent and he was a good talker—my great-grandfather judged him to be a man who'd seen a great deal and traveled a long way and educated himself in the process. He had a practiced voice, too, sometimes soft and sometimes booming out like a drum—the kind of voice men in the Congress cultivated in the old days when they made an art of debate and a man's principles were his life and his life was his principles.

This man, like the others, was there for maybe a minute, maybe an hour, maybe the best part of the night. He had a good deal to say, but much of it my great-grandfather had forgotten. He talked about a bloody battle and a hated man named Santa Anna. And when Santa Anna's troops finally gained the fort, he said, the old colonel was lying crippled on a cot but he ringed the room with Santa Anna's dead before they got him. And then, this man said the thing that my great-grandfather remembered the way you remember the sound of a bugle in the night. He said, "Be sure you are right, then go ahead." He paused—a dramatic kind of pause, the kind actors use. Then he said it again, "Be sure you are right, then go ahead."

He was gone—gone the way the sound of a bugle goes in the night—but the damage was done.

The next morning my great-grandfather talked about the Dakotas to Martha. He beat about the bush a good while, pretending that it was just an impersonal though interesting matter like a big fire in New York or a hurricane off Florida. But he didn't fool her for a second. She got up from her chair and came over to him and looked him straight in the eye with her mouth smiling. She said, "All right, George."

And that was all that was needed—just Martha smiling and saying, "All right, George," in her steady voice.

Well, he wasn't a wealthy man by any means—he had comfort and security, but wealth belonged to the old in the New England of those times, and you were a long time coming into it. But he had a fair stake when they left—he and Martha and the boy and the girl. He was better off than most, and

he knew something about the handling of money.

It was spring when they left Connecticut, and it was still spring when they reached the Dakotas. There was never a finer spring anywhere than they found there. The sky went on forever, blue as a young girl's dress, with a few scattered clouds to make the pattern complete. Under the sky there was the prairie, and it was all and more than he had read and been told. As any man could see, there was no end to the prairie—it was a world in itself, eternal and infinite, and the loam was as black as a deacon's coat.

**T**HERE were new towns here, too, but they were different from the mining towns of years ago in the Far West. The buildings were of rough lumber, the roofs covered with tar-paper, but even so there was a curious feeling of permanence about them. It was as if they marked the start of something that was to last. It was as if men had said, "This is the beginning, and it is a small thing, but great things shall grow from it." Some day the towns would be cities, and wood would turn to stone and marble, but it would all be an evolution of what was being made here now.

That was what the people felt, my great-grandfather told me, and never on earth had there been a more mixed collection of people than in the Dakotas. They came of all races, and they spoke all tongues, but they all had certain things held in common, and one of them was faith.

There isn't much more of my great-grandfather's story. There was the store, and then the little bank, and then the newspaper. There was the house that started as one room and a kitchen and little by little became something it was a pleasure to live in, with flowers lining the walks and the grass rich and green in its season. Best of all, there were the times when he said to Martha, my great-grandmother, "Well, would you like to be back in Connecticut tonight?"

She laughed, for it was a familiar joke. "Connecticut's a fine place," she said, "but this will do for me."

It would take a real historian, a man with all the facts right at his finger-tips, to describe to you properly what happened in the black year. My great-grandfather told me some of it, but part of what he said I have forgotten, and I don't think it was all clear in his own mind either. There was a great wind that year, greater than even the oldest settler could remember, and the wind picked up the ploughed soil as if it were so much fluff, and sometimes

you couldn't see across the street or from house to barn for the soil blowing. Then there was a drought, and it too was worse than even the oldest settler could remember, and the crop perished. And back in the East, where the men with money were, there was trouble in the banks and exchanges and the West starved for credit and it had no cash.

That was the way it was, my great-grandfather told me. One day he sat down at his desk and added up his assets, and in another column he added up his debits, and in still another place he made a rough estimate of his prospects. The way the sum came out was as plain as the multiplication table. The country was broke, and he was broke along with almost everyone in it, and he was one of the lucky ones because he had a fine place to return to back in New England.

Well, it was a bitter walk home that evening. He went slowly, he told me, and every step of the way his mind thought overtime. It went round and round like a chipmunk on a spinning wheel, and it always stopped at the same place. Here he was, nearing his middle age, and he'd have to go crawling back to New England with everyone knowing he'd been both a fool and a failure. Being just one, my great-grandfather said, wasn't so bad, but being the two was certainly intolerable.

Now, you may be thinking that this night, when he was lower in mind and heart than he'd ever been before, another one of those strange men appeared and gave him the word that he needed. If you're thinking that, you're wrong. Someone talked to him, all right, but it wasn't a stranger and it wasn't a man. It was a woman, and she was as familiar and as close to him as his own hand.

She said, this woman did, with her voice soft and sure in the darkness, "We'll stay, George. We'll see it through one way or another. A bad crop and a black year and a panic in the East are things you have to take in your stride. There'll be other times."

I don't know her exact words, but that was the gist of what she said. And suddenly, my great-grandfather told me, all the uncertainties went away, just as clouds pass after a storm, and the decisions were all made. There wasn't any more thought or talk of going back to New England.

I won't go into any detail about what happened to my great-grandfather after that. There were hard years and long years, but it all came out properly in the end. He never got as rich as he might have if he'd stayed in Connecticut, but he got as rich as he ever wanted to be. On top of that, he did

what he knew he ought to be doing, and what man can ask more?

That brings me to the end of it, the point I've been running after. One time I asked my great-grandfather if he ever knew the names of the people who come to him in the night when he needed them most. He looked at me, and he put his pipe down, and his white moustaches relaxed just a little. "Well," he said, "as a matter of fact, boy, I do. The last one—the woman—well, I guess you know who she was."

"Yes, sir," I said impatiently. She was my great-grandmother Martha, of course, and so there was nothing remarkable in that. I wanted to get on to the others, the strange men.

He looked past me, and his eyes were as brown as agate in the sun. "She had a lot in common with the rest of them," he said.

But here I was, all curiosity about the men, and he was keeping me waiting on tenterhooks while he talked about my great-grandmother!

"The men, now," he said slowly. "Yes, I know their names. You've probably heard some of them, and you'll hear the rest as you grow older and get along with your education. They were Jim Bridger and Davey Crockett. And La Salle—he was the Frenchman. And Meriwether Lewis—he was the first one who came. They had aliases, too—Daniel Boone and Kit Carson and John Fremont. They had so many other names I could never hope to remember them all, but that's who they were, boy."

**I** STOOD there looking at him with my mouth open, and then I said the only thing I could think of. I said, "Did you ever happen to see them clearly, sir? Do you know what they looked like?"

My great-grandfather picked up his pipe and lighted it. He puffed along for a while, and he was looking right through me the way you look through a thin veil. Then, finally, he said, "As a matter of fact, boy, I kind of forget their features, but there's one thing I do remember that may strike you as interesting. They all looked alike, every last mother's son of them. Yes, sir, they looked as alike as peas in a pod and that's the truth. Nobody could have told one from another."

Believe it or not, that was what my great-grandfather said. His eyes were as brown as agate, and he had his pipe going full blast, and his moustaches were raised up as if there were little springs hidden inside them. They all looked alike, my great-grandfather said, and he was known to everyone as a truthful man.



Illustration by Robert P. Tristram Coffin  
from the book *One-Horse Farm*

## The Poetry of R. P. Tristram Coffin

A new book of poems from the pen of Robert P. Tristram Coffin is an event, though it brings the total of his poetry volumes to fifteen, and of all his books to thirty-six. *One-Horse Farm*,\* his newest volume, keeps Mr. Coffin's reputation as the "Virgil of Maine" as shining as one of the gleaming milk pails in his own warm barn. These idyls of rural life in Maine and of boys growing up are rich with the sounds and scents of the earth and the salt tang of the Maine coast.



Mr. Coffin himself grew up on a Maine saltwater farm such as he describes, went to a rural red-brick schoolhouse, then on to Bowdoin, Princeton, and then Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar just before and after his two years in World War I. He has won many honors, including the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, and he is now back at his beloved Bowdoin, where he is a professor of English. In 1945 he was elected a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

Besides teaching and lecturing and writing, Mr. Coffin keeps in trim on his two farms—one a freshwater farm on the Kennebec River, the other a saltwater farm on the Maine coast. And for a number of years he has found time

\**One-Horse Farm*, by Robert P. Tristram Coffin. Illustrations by the author. 109 pages. The Macmillan Co.; New York. 1949. \$2.50.

each spring to be one of the poetry judges of the Scholastic Writing Awards.

Now for the poems themselves—

In the poem that serves as a "Foreword," Mr. Coffin defends the one-horse farm, for

There where one horse plows the land  
Men have much to do by hand,  
And working with the hands is start  
Of music, poetry, and art.  
No machinery ever can  
Make a *Bible*; it takes a man  
Caring for a flock of sheep  
And seeing in the starry deep  
Beyond his sheepfold's handmade bars  
The Good Shepherd of the stars.

In "Plowing," we can feel the Maine soil yielding as

The horse's chest is sprinkled with the lather  
From his bitted mouth. The earth is coming  
Open dark and smoking. There is humming  
Like distant surf, and all the apple trees  
Are loud upon the hill with smoking bees

Read the poems aloud, listen to the poet record the music of the barn at "Milking Time," when

Peace goes tiptoe on her rounds,  
The streams of milk make quiet sounds  
In the milk-pails of clean tin.

. . .

There is not a single word  
Under the rafters, under the stars,  
There are only treble bars  
Of milky music changing to dim  
Baritone as milk-pails brim.

In "Cider Pressing," the poet tells how

The cider pours down in a silky flood,  
Darker than the dusk is, dark as blood,  
The tenders stoop above it as it streams,  
Up to their wrists in something deep as dreams,  
They pour old sunlight into hollow wood.  
The year is ending, and the men smell good . . .

And after "Gathering the Pumpkins," the boys and the hired man

. . . drive home on a mountain of gold,  
The cart tips, pumpkins, boys are rolled  
Into the yard. And here are pies  
For snowy days, here heads with eyes  
And mouths of fire to astound  
Girls at night for miles around!

And there is much to remember on the "Shortest Day of the Year"

By the fireside, where the bloom  
Of popcorn flowers scents the room,  
And the roasting herring's smoke  
Mingles with the smell of oak . . .  
In the sunlight of old wood  
Homely furniture looks good,  
A star shines in each scoured pan,  
And it feels good to be a man.



By JESSE STUART

Author of *Man With a Bull-Tongue Flew*,  
*Beyond Dark Hills*, *Taps for Private Yossie*,  
*Tales from the Plum Grove Hills*, etc.

# The thread that runs so true



Teaching school in the  
Kentucky hills called for  
many things besides ability—  
you needed strong fists, too.

**M**ONDAY morning when I started on my way to school, I had with me Don Conway, a pupil twenty years of age, who had never planned to enter school again. I was the new teacher here at Lonesome Valley and I didn't know what kind of brains he had. He had left school when he was in the fourth grade. But I did know that he had two good fists and that he would be on my side.

I insisted and almost begged Don to return to school when he and I were sitting on the porch late one Sunday afternoon and Ova Salyers and Guy Hawkins rode past on their horses. They glanced toward the porch for their first look at the new teacher, never spoke but rode silently down the road.

Don Conway looked at Guy Hawkins and Ova Salyers and then he looked at me. He didn't ask me how old I was. I didn't tell him in eighteen more days I would be seventeen. One had to be eighteen before he was old enough to teach school. Don Conway knew the fate of my sister when she was employed to teach the Lonesome Valley pupils. He knew how Guy Hawkins had blacked her eyes with his fists, had whipped her before the Lonesome Valley pupils. She was a fair-haired, beautiful blue-eyed girl of nineteen when she had come to Lonesome Valley. She went home a nervous wreck, long before her school was finished. After I'd seen the way my sister was beaten up, I begged to go to Lonesome Valley. I knew the school I wanted if I passed the examination.

When Don and I reached the schoolhouse, at least thirty-five pupils were there waiting outside. Guy Hawkins and Ova Salyers were standing together near the coalhouse with their torn-and-tattered, first-grade books. They looked out of place with the

other pupils. They were larger than either Don or me. They were older too. They looked at me when I said "Good morning" to them. Many of the pupils turned shyly away and did not speak. Each had his dinner basket or bucket in his hand. The majority of them carried tattered-edged and backless books.

The girls wore pigtailed down their backs tied with all colors of ribbons. They wore clean print dresses and they were barefooted. Not one pupil in my school, large or small, boy or girl, wore a pair of shoes.

"Well, I'm opening the door," I said, to break the silence of my pupils.

When I walked down the broad center aisle and pulled on the bell rope, the soft tones sounded over the tobacco, corn, and cane fields and the lush green valley; with the ringing of this bell, my school had begun. I knew that not half the pupils in the school census were here. There were 104 in the school census, of school age, for whom the state sent per capita money to pay for their schooling. I had thirty-five pupils.

I thought the soft tones of this school bell through the rising mists and over warm cultivated fields where parents and their children were trying to eke out a bare subsistence from the soil might bring back warm memories of happy school days. For I remembered the tones of the Plum Grove school bell, and how I had longed to be back in school after I had quit at the age of nine to work for twenty-five cents a day to help support my family. If I could have, I would have returned to school when I heard the Plum Grove bell. And I hoped it would be the same for my pupils in Lonesome Valley.

During my first day all I did was enroll my pupils in their classes, call them up front to the recitation seat and give them assignments in the few textbooks they possessed.

The July sun beat down on the galvanized tin roof. This made the pine boards so hot inside they oozed resin.

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I knew the reason that all the rural schools had to begin in July, though the farmers had objected because they needed their children at home to help with farm work. Rural schools began early because coal was an added expense for winter months. The county schools all over the state had barely enough funds to keep them going, and if they could have school during the hot months it sheared away a great expense from their budgets. But it was hard on the children and the teachers.

When I dismissed my pupils for the first recess, a fifteen-minute period between the beginning of the school day and the noon hour, I was amazed to see them all jump up from their seats at the same time and try to be the first out of the house. Why were they running? I wondered. I had a few minutes' work to do before I could join them on the playground. Before I had finished this work, I heard the tenor of their uneven voices singing these familiar words:

The needle's eye that does supply,  
The thread that runs so true.  
Many a bean have I let go,  
Because I wanted you.

Many a dark and stormy night,  
When I went home with you.  
I stumped my toe and down I go,  
Because I wanted you.

I walked to the door and watched them. They had formed a circle, hand in hand, and around and around they walked and sang these words while two pupils held their locked hands high for the circle to pass under. Suddenly the two standing—one inside the circle and one outside—let their arms drop down to take a pupil from the line. Then the circle continued to march and sing while the two took the pupil aside and asked him whether he would rather be a train or an automobile. If the pupil said he'd rather be an automobile, he stood on one side; if a train, he stood on the other of the two that held hands. And when they had finished taking everybody from the circle, the two groups faced each other, lined up behind their captains. Each put his arms around the pupil in front of him and locked his hands. The first line to break apart or to be pulled forward lost the game.

• • •

Tuesday when I stood beside Guy Hawkins and showed him how to hold his book when he read, my pupils laughed until I had to stop them. I was trying to teach Guy to read as he stumbled over the simple words in the *First Grade Reader*. My pupils laughed because Guy was taller by two inches than

I was and heavier. He had a bullneck almost as large as his head, and a prominent jaw. His beard was so heavy that he had to shave every day.

Guy had big hands. His right hand covered the back of his *First Reader*. And he had powerful arms. The muscles rippled under his clean blue-faded shirt. I measured him as I stood beside him. I knew that if I ever had to fight him, it would be a fight. And I knew that I wasn't going to fight him unless he forced me to fight. He was more powerful physically than I was.

Then I looked down at Ova Salyers sitting on the recitation seat beside me. If it were not for these two young men, I wouldn't have had any trouble disciplining my school. All the other pupils played hard and they were obedient. I had ten-year-old pupils just starting to school. Nineteen-year-olds in the first grade. Fourteen-year-olds in the second grade. They had not been promoted because they had never attended a full school term. They had taken the same grade over and over until they could stand and recite some of the beginning lessons from memory.

The following Monday I had stayed at the schoolhouse to do some work on my school records, and Don Conway had gone home with his sister and brothers. This was the first afternoon I had stayed at school after all my pupils had gone. The room was very silent and I was busy working when I heard soft footsteps walking around the building. I looked through the window on my left and I saw Guy Hawkins' head.

I wondered why he was coming back. I wondered if he had forgotten something.

Then I realized this was the first time he had been able to catch me by myself. Guy came in the door. I didn't want him to see me looking up at him, but I did see him coming down the broad middle aisle, taking long steps and swinging his big arms. He looked madder than any man or animal I had ever seen. He walked up to my desk and stood silently before me.

"Did you forget something, Guy?" I asked.

"Naw, I've never forgot nothin'," he reminded me.

"Then what do you want?" I asked.

"Whip you," he said.

"Why do you want to whip me?" I asked him.

"I didn't like your sister," he said.

"You know what I done to her."

"Yes, I know what you did to her," I said.

"I'm a-goin' to do the same thing to you," he threatened.

"Why do you want to fight me?" I asked him. I stood up facing him.



"I don't like you," he said. "I don't like teachers. I said never another person with your name would teach this school. Not as long as I'm here."

"It's too bad you don't like me or my name," I said, my temper rising.

"I won't be satisfied until I've whipped you," he said.

"Can you go to another school?" I asked him. "The Valley School is not too far from where you live."

"Naw, naw," he shouted. "If anybody leaves, you'll leave. I was in Lonesome Valley first. And I ain't a-goin' to no other school because of you!"

"Then there's nothing left for us to do but fight," I said. "I've come to teach this school and I'm going to teach it!"

"Maybe you will," he snarled. "I have you penned in this school house. I have you where I want you. You can't get away! You can't run! I aim to whip you right where you stand! It's the same place where I whipped your sister!"

I looked at his face. It was red as a sliced beet. Fire danced in his pale-blue, elongated eyes. I knew Guy Hawkins meant every word he said, I knew I had to face him and to fight. There was no other way around.

"Will you let me take my necktie off?" I said, remembering I'd been choked by a fellow pulling my necktie once in a fight.

"Yep, take off that purty tie," he said. "You might get it dirty by the time I'm through with you."

I slowly took off my tie.

"Roll up the sleeves of your white shirt, too," he said. "But they'll be dirty by the time I sweep this floor up with you."

"Sweep the floor up with me," I said.

He shot out his long arm but I ducked. I felt the wind from his thrust against my ear.

I mustn't let him clinch me, I thought.

Then he came back with another right and I ducked his second lick. I came around with my first lick—a right—and planted it on his jaw, not a good lick but just enough to jar him and make him madder. When he rushed at me, I sidestepped. He missed. By the time he had turned around, I caught him with a haymaker on the chin that reeled him. Then I followed up with another lick as hard as I had ever hit a man. Yet I didn't bring him down. He came back for more. But he didn't reach me this time. He was right. I did get my shirt dirty. I dove through the air with a flying tackle. I hit him beneath the knees. I'd tackled like this in football. I'd tackled hard. And I never tackled anybody harder than Guy. His feet went from under him, and I scooted past on the pine floor. I'd tackled him so quickly when he had expected me to come back at him with my fists, that he went down so fast he couldn't catch me with his hands. His face hit flat against the floor and his nose was flattened. The blood spurted as he started to get up.

I let him get to his feet. I wondered if I should. For I knew it was either him or me. One of us had to whip. When he did get to his feet after that terrible fall, I waded into him. I hit fast and I hit hard. He swung wild. His fingernail

## About the author . . .

● Jesse Stuart is a born teacher. He made learning an exciting adventure wherever he taught in the Kentucky hills he loves and writes about. He is also a born fighter and he has fought for better schools as a teacher, principal, superintendent, and farmer-writer. *The Thread That Runs So True*, his newest volume of autobiography, is eloquent evidence that he still carries on the fight. Mr. Stuart, now 42, began to write while he was a teacher, and has published poetry, short stories, novels, and autobiography. He has been a Scholastic Writing Awards judge for many years. *The Thread That Runs So True* is dedicated to the teachers of America, but it should be read by every student as well. It is a tribute to Jesse Stuart's teaching ability that he made a friend, a good student, and eventually a teacher of Guy Hawkins.

took a streak of hide from my neck and left a red mark that smarted and the blood oozed through. I pounded his chin. I caught him on the bearded jaw. I reeled him back and followed up. I gave him a left to the short ribs while my right in a split second caught his mouth. Blood spurted again. Yet he was not through. But I knew I had him.

"Had enough?" I panted.

He didn't answer. I didn't ask him a second time. I hit him hard enough to knock two men down. I reeled him back against a seat. I followed up. I caught him with a haymaker under the chin and laid him across the desk. Then he rolled to the floor. He lay there with blood running from his nose and mouth. His eyes were rolled back. I was nearly out of breath. My hands ached. My heart pounded. If this is teaching school! I thought. If this goes with it! Then I remembered vaguely I had asked for it. I'd asked for this school. I would take no other.

Guy Hawkins lay there sprawled on the unswept floor. His blood was mingled with the yellow dirt carried into the schoolroom by seventy bare feet. I went back and got the water bucket. With a clean handkerchief, I washed blood from his mouth and nose. I couldn't wash it from his shirt. I put cool water to his forehead.

I worked over a pupil—trying to bring him back to his senses—who only a few hours before I had stood beside and tried to teach how to pronounce words when he read. Now I had whipped him and I wondered as I looked at him stretched on the floor how I'd done it. I knew the place where we had fought would always be marked. It was difficult to remove bloodstains from pine wood. It would always be there, this reminder,

as long as I taught school at Lonesome Valley.

When Guy Hawkins came to his senses, I helped him to his feet.

"Mr. Stuart, I really got it poured on me," he admitted. "You're some fighter."

This was the first time he had ever called me "Mr. Stuart." I had heard, but had pretended not to hear, him call me "Old Jess" every time my back was turned. He had never before, when he had spoken directly to me, called me anything.

"I'm not much of a fighter until I have to fight, Guy," I said. "You asked for it. There was no way around. I had to fight you."

"I know it," he said. "I've had in mind to whip you ever since I heard you's a-goin' to teach this school. But you win. You winned fair, too," he honestly admitted. "I didn't think you could hit like that."

Guy was still weak. His nose and mouth kept bleeding. He didn't have a handkerchief and I gave him a clean one.

"Think you can make it home all right, Guy?"

"I think so," he said.

He walked slower from the school house than he had walked in. I stood by the window and watched him walk across the schoolyard, then across the foot log and down the Lonesome Creek Road until he went out of sight. I knew this was one day in my teaching career I would never forget.

Before sundown the news of our fight had reached the Valley. Never was any teacher more respected by everybody in his community than I was now. Men that I had met before on the Lonesome Creek Road, men that had shyly spoken or had not spoken at all, stopped and introduced themselves and thanked me for "doing the job." And before we stopped talking, nearly everyone said the same thing, that he needed his children at home to help strip cane and cut cane wood and cut tobacco, but he was going to try to do the work himself so he could send his children to school to me. And these words, coming from tall, lean, bearded-faced figures of the earth, men who when they liked and respected you would die for you, men who when they hated and despised you would kill you, made me feel good.

Narrow-gauged Lonesome Valley had made men like these. This was their small world. They had been born here. They had married here. Their children had been born here. And when these men became vitally interested in sending their children to school to me instead of having them help with the work at home, I knew that I would give all to have a good school for their children.

## NUENEN

# The Life and Paintings of

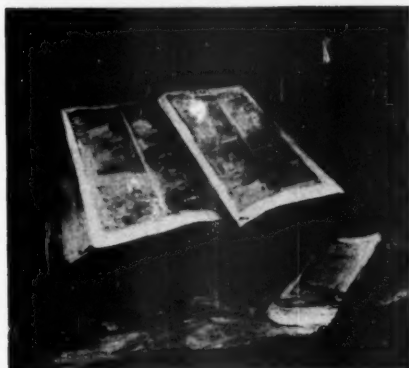
# Vincent van Gogh

A WALK NEAR NUENEN—painting, Holland period



1. December, 1883. Over the marshy fields of Holland lies bitter cold. At the end of the road is the village of Nuenen. Vincent van Gogh, 30, son of the pastor, has come home.

OPEN BIBLE—painting, Holland period



2. He too has been a preacher, but ordinary churchgoers feared the man and his raw, stumbling intensity.

PEASANTS DIGGING—drawing, Holland period



3. Because he has to find another way to express his intense love of his fellow men, he becomes what he was meant to be, a painter. He does not see his native land as a pretty picture book.

THE POTATO EATERS—painting, Holland period



4. His eye broods with equal love on the hard-working people and on their humble belongings. But two years later other horizons call him. The lonely wanderer sets out again, this time headed toward his own destiny.

## PARIS

SELF PORTRAIT OF VAN GOGH—painting, Paris period



5. Paris receives the stranger. Paris, the city of hopes and dreams and questions. A tiny flat for a studio, a new palette, a new way of seeing things.

WOMAN AT CAFE DU TAMBOURIN—painting, Paris period



6. In streets and cafes he meets other painters seeking a new way of expression. But he feels the huge city's cold self-interest.

THE BRIDGE—painting, Paris period



7. He yearns for a warmer light. He has discovered Japanese prints, and is haunted by their clear, brilliant contrasts.

SUN FLOWERS—painting, Paris period



8. As he left the marshes of his native Holland, so he now leaves the gray skies of Paris and the lonely evenings of solitude. He flees toward the sun.

PUBLIC GARDENS AT ARLES—painting, Arles period

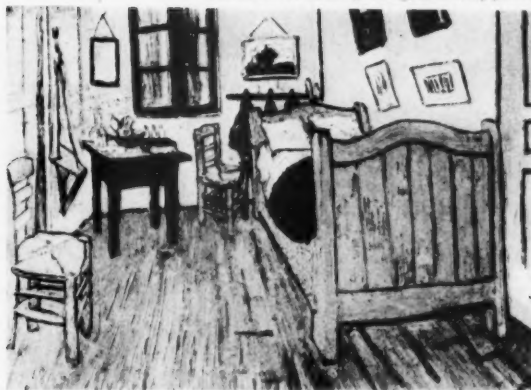


## ARLES

9. At Arles it is no longer a dream. The sun burns. The flowers spring from the earth in dazzling colors. This is Provence, the end of the journey.



BEDROOM IN ARLES—painting, Saint Remy period



10. Van Gogh tramps the roads. Drunk with ecstasy he roams the fields. At dusk, feverish and sore, he returns to his bare, ugly room. With deceptive calm he paints on and on, often day and night, without rest.

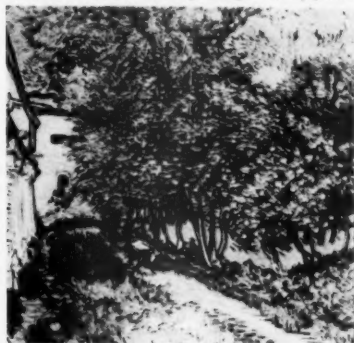
VAN GOGH WITH PIPE—painting, Arles period



11. Suddenly the world of reality bursts into fragments around van Gogh. One Christmas Eve, in a fit of madness, he slashes off his right ear.

## SAINT REMY

GARDEN AT HOSPITAL—painting, St. Remy period



12. At Saint Remy the doors of the madhouse close upon him. A garden surrounded by walls.

ON THE THRESHOLD OF ETERNITY—painting, St. Remy period



THE PRISON COURTYARD—painting, St. Remy period



13. An unaccustomed silence, an agonizing calm. He is a prisoner of himself as well as of others. Yet he must go on painting.

14. He paints the grim scenes within the asylum. Then the doctors decide that van Gogh's condition is improving. They allow him to paint outside the iron gates.



ROAD WITH CYPRESSES—painting, St. Remy period



15. Van Gogh succeeds in escaping. The earth spites him in the face. The light screams, and the trees dance.

THE AUVERS STAIRS—painting, Auvers period



18. If only he could rest now, give up everything. Six years he has driven himself relentlessly. His whole soul cries out. Finally he must choose. On July 27, 1890, too young to know the glory that will be his, he stands before his easel in a ploughed field and puts a bullet through his heart.



LANDSCAPE—early drawing, Holland period

## AUVERS

THE RAVINE—painting, St. Remy period



16. Still he must paint, paint the song of the world. But the world turns fast. At the peak of his genius, van Gogh, the conqueror, halts, faint with dizziness. He seeks refuge in Auvers.

17. In the little town of Auvers, only an hour from Paris, there are peaceful cottages like those in the village where he was born. But he is utterly used up, utterly consumed. A fever burns within him, devouring his whole being.

# One Special for Doc

Allen was desperate, but Doc had just the  
remedy the young man needed



## CHARACTERS

NARRATOR, DOC HARSHAW  
ALLEN, JULIE, HANK

By MILTON GEIGER

**MUSIC:** *Descriptive mood to background.*

**SOUND:** *Thunder up; rush of rain against windows.*

**NARRATOR:** It is late at night. Dark rain glistens on the streets and drives relentlessly against the bright show windows of Doc Will Harshaw's drug store. *(Music fades out)*

Inside, white-haired, bespectacled Doc Harshaw prepares to close up. There is a momentary rattling of the front door; the door opens and a young man comes in. Doc clears his throat tentatively; it is strange that this boy should be out in this weather. Doc's voice betrays the questioning in his mind. . . .

**HARSHAW:** Er . . . good evening.

**ALLEN (after short pause):** . . . Huh? Oh . . . oh . . . yes. Good evening. *(Then after seeming to reflect a moment) Not much! (There is an unexpected bitterness in his words.)*

**HARSHAW:** H'm . . . Well, it is a bit spotty out. But I like it. Keeps the world at bay for a while.

**ALLEN (with short, nervous laugh):** Oh . . . if I'm intruding . . .

**HARSHAW:** Oh . . . no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Nice to have you, I'm sure.

**ALLEN (briskly):** Well . . . I originally intended this to be a business call of sorts. So here goes. . . . Fact of the matter is, I've cut myself. See, I attempted to bandage it up. Nasty cut!

**HARSHAW (with a note of gentle mockery):** Oh, now that's too-o-o-o-o bad!

**ALLEN (deaf to irony):** Oh, not that bad! But . . . well . . . those things can develop into something serious, I've been told. Infection, you know.

**HARSHAW:** By all means. Infection.

**ALLEN:** Er . . . so I'd like a bottle of

those -- what-do-you-call-'ems. They're blue tablets. You know? In a crinkly blue bottle?

**HARSHAW:** Oh, yes. One moment, please.

**SOUND:** *Clatters in drawer full of bottles. Clears throat.*

**HARSHAW:** Er . . . er . . . these?

**ALLEN (with greatly increased agitation):** Yes . . . yes . . . that . . . that's what I mean. Er . . . how much are they, please?

**HARSHAW:** Enough, I assure you. But first I'll have to register this sale. Have to register all sales of . . . *(he pauses and places added emphasis on his last words)* . . . of . . . deadly poisons.

**ALLEN (as though to himself):** Deadly . . . poisons! *(Then sharply)* Why must you register it? I'm not going to murder my aunt, you know!

**HARSHAW (brusquely):** Matter of fact, young feller, I don't know anything of the sort. That's quite beside the point. It's the law that I register the sale of a dangerous poison, and the law is operating strictly in your interest. It's for your own protection. Now . . . name, please?

**ALLEN (hesitates):** Well . . . all right. Er . . . Peter Jones.

**HARSHAW (dubiously):** Jones, eh? Very well. *(Spells slowly as he writes)* P-e-t-e-r J-o-n-e-s. Address?

**ALLEN:** That too? 2236 Forest Grove.

**HARSHAW:** 2-2-3-6 F-o-r-e-s-t G-r-o-v-e. Purpose of deadly poison?

**ALLEN:** Antiseptic for wound.

**HARSHAW:** Uh-huh. Twenty-five seven-and-a-half-grain tablets. And then I sign my own proud name and fill in the date and hour of purchase, and that's that! That didn't hurt one bit now, did it? You'll be mighty careful with this stuff, won't you? Ever use it before?

**ALLEN:** Certainly. I . . . I've just gone through the last of one bottle and so I

had to run out for more. I was sharpening my pencil with a rusty blade and it slipped.

**HARSHAW (amiably informative, chatty):** It isn't the rust that does the damage. It's the germs under the rust scales. Uh . . . that's a mighty pretty gold and onyx ring you're wearing under that bandage. Class ring?

**ALLEN (irritably):** Yes. High school. Can't get it off. I guess I've sort of grown into it. My--my girl gave it to me. Wouldn't let me buy my own. *(Suddenly impatient)* I'm in a hurry, Doc. How much will that come to?

**SOUND:** *A rumble of thunder and a greater burst of rain against the windows.*

**HARSHAW:** Won't you be wanting some bandage and adhesive tape? What's the rush? It's raining the Amazon River out there. Stick around a little. *(His voice suddenly confidential, inviting confidences)* Stick around, boy. We ought to talk.

**ALLEN:** Wha . . . what do you mean?

**HARSHAW (chatty again):** You know, sometimes people get sore because I ask all these questions when they buy poisons for their own good and legitimate reasons. "Do you think I'm going to murder my aunt?" they ask me. Or . . .

**ALLEN (apologetic, sheepish):** Oh . . . I didn't mean to . . .

**HARSHAW:** Or they want to know do I think they're considering suicide. It's no affair of mine if they are. They can if they like. They can dissolve the lining right out of their stomachs if it suits them. I've the law to comply with. Look . . . suppose your wife . . .

**ALLEN (savagely):** I'm not married!

**HARSHAW (taken aback):** All right, all right. Mere manner of speaking. Suppose then the . . . er . . . police should find you moaning in your bathroom. They'd come to me as one of the

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town's druggists. They'd say, "Mr. Harshaw, did a young feller with a gray slouch hat and a tan topcoat and worried brown eyes and a gold and onyx class ring buy any poison here lately?" And I'd tell them, "Why, yes. He got some blue antiseptic tablets. Why?" And they'd say, "Okay, Doc. That's all we want to know. Thanks." By that time, though, there wouldn't be much they could do for you.

ALLEN (*unguardedly*): Wouldn't there?

HARSHAW (*gravely*): No. The stuff's purgatory! It . . . it's the worst thing a feller can take. Horrible! (*Intensely, with a climactic rising of his voice*) It's like white-hot coals burning and eating and searing your innards. . . . Your stomach's afire! The membranes burn and wither away and you scream and squirm and pray you'll die. I . . . I can't describe the agony of it! Weeks . . . months, maybe, of torture . . . eating . . . tearing you apart . . . burning! The narcotics the doctors give you don't help much. It's corrosive—like acid, you know.

ALLEN (*shaken*): No. I didn't know. HARSHAW: Yes, if you die, so much the better for you, because the nervous shock will wreck you for life. And your stomach's so badly burned that you spend the rest of your days on a diet of gruel and buttered toast and warm milk. Buttered toast and warm milk! When all the time your starving body cries out for a thick, juicy steak and strong bread! ALLEN: You . . . you're hurting my shoulder!

HARSHAW (*laughs shortly*): Oh. I didn't know. Sorry. (*Slaps boy's shoulder in camaraderie.*)

ALLEN: That . . . that was some lecture! I guess you know though. It's your business.

HARSHAW (*significantly*): Sure. It's my business. Other things are my business, too.

ALLEN: What do you mean . . . other things, too?

### About the author . . .

● The idea for this play came to Milton Geiger while he was a practicing pharmacist in Cleveland, Ohio. He wrote it at 11:30 one night after a 12-hour day selling all sorts of things, including the tablets in the crinkly blue bottle. It was his second radio play, and it went on the air starring Henry Hull. The play has had many performances since, with other stars, and is one of the most popular in radio. Most of Milton Geiger's life has been spent in Cleveland, but he now divides his time between New York and Hollywood, shuttling between his various radio writing assignments. He is one of the most versatile writers in radio.

HARSHAW (*gently*): Listen, boy . . . you didn't cut yourself. Now *did* you? (*Long pause. We hear the young man's labored breathing.*)

SOUND: Roll of thunder.

ALLEN (*defiantly*): Well . . . all right! So I didn't cut myself! What about it? Here . . . I'll take off the bandage. There! Not a scratch! Feel better now. Sherlock Holmes?

HARSHAW (*without triumph*): I knew it. Don't you know you can't dip a gold ring into a solution of this stuff without the gold's turning to silver? Forms an amalgam. Where's your high-school chemistry, boy?

ALLEN (*in distraction*): I don't know . . . I don't know! I wanted to . . . Oh, I don't know anything, now! Please don't ask me any more questions. Maybe I'd better go.

HARSHAW: No. Tell you what. I'm closing up now, and it's not raining too heavily. We'll walk it off and talk it over. And maybe we'll stop at Hank's Barbecue for a snack. Talk it over, see? What do you say, kid?

ALLEN: All right. All right, I guess.

HARSHAW: Good boy! You read a magazine or something and I'll start counting up.

SOUND: Cash register rings; clink and jingle of coins. Fade down and out. Fade-in footsteps of Harshaw and Allen. Rain and remote thunder.

HARSHAW: Minute you came in I knew something was wrong. It's bad stuff lettin' yourself go that way. You have a lot to live for.

ALLEN: I must have been crazy, Doc.

HARSHAW: You looked fairly prosperous for a youngster. And you looked healthy. So I figured it couldn't be that. That leaves one other thing—especially when the principal . . . or principals . . . are young and foolish. (*Pause*) Is she pretty?

ALLEN (*choking up*): She's . . . beautiful!

HARSHAW: Well . . . if you'd like to talk . . . go ahead. Maybe you'll feel better about it all.

ALLEN: I want to talk. And I'm glad it's you I have to talk to. (*Pause*) It seems so . . . so trivial, now. But I can't go back to her! I can't!

HARSHAW: It's not that bad.

ALLEN: I don't know. Julie and I have been sweethearts ever since we were kids in school. In high school we were inseparable. We always said we . . . we'd get married. We meant everything to each other. It's been a long time, Doc . . . waiting. But I couldn't ever seem to make enough money at my jobs . . .

HARSHAW: You're young.

ALLEN: Tonight . . . tonight I came down to see her. I . . . I never saw her looking so lovely. Something in silver

and black that made her look whiter and more beautiful than I'd ever seen her. She was waiting for someone . . . and I knew she wasn't expecting me . . . (*His voice fades out. Dead air. Then . . .*)

ALLEN (*tensely, resentfully*): You're beautiful tonight, Julie. I've never seen you so . . . so . . . radiant and . . . all.

JULIE (*subdued and tense*): Thank you, Allen.

ALLEN: That's . . . a . . . a mighty sweet dress you're wearing. I never saw it, Julie.

JULIE (*trying to be gay*): Yes . . . yes . . . I just had it made. Isn't it a terrible night!

ALLEN (*resentfully, suspiciously*): Yes . . . Julie. Terrible.

JULIE: Allen! Don't look at me so strangely. As though I'd done something terribly wrong.

ALLEN: Nothing wrong. Unless it's just a little bit wrong to throw over a fellow that's been crazy about you ever since he was a kid in velvet pants.

JULIE: Oh, Allen! Don't think wrong of me. I've fought with myself. I don't want to lose you. But Pearson has been such a good friend to us. Mother and me. We were going to the theater.

ALLEN: The theater. Harmless enough. The theater. But there'll be another in a week and another after that, and another, and a string of them makes a courtship. And an expensive one that I can't afford yet—or maybe ever. I'm only an engineer. All right. Take Pearson! He's platinum-plated enough. Take him! (*Laughs*) And I thought I was tops! Sweet little school romance blossoming into cactus!

JULIE: Allen! What are you saying?

ALLEN: You've said it yourself. "Allen, not yet. We've got to save. We want to start right, Allen. We mustn't start the voyage with a light sail and an empty hold." Very prettily put! But a mockery. The run-around, if you please! Well, I'm through waiting for Pearson to take you from under my nose. I'm through, I tell you! I'm through! (*Fades out hysterically*)

SOUND: Light patter of rain; footsteps on gravel.

ALLEN: So that was that. And here we are.

HARSHAW: You're young. I was young, too. (*Pause*)

SOUND: Thunder rolls distantly.

HARSHAW: Well, here's Hank's place.

SOUND: Door opens and closes.

HARSHAW: Hey, Hank, I've brought customers. Do I get ten per cent? Five? I'll settle for doughnuts.

HANK: Hi, Doc. You shure beeg kidder. Ho, ho! (*Immediately business-like*) What'll gonna be? Bum night, hah? What'll gonna be?

HARSHAW: What'll gonna be, kid?  
Unquote.

ALLEN: I don't know. That hamburger with grilled onion on rye sounds pretty good. And coffee.

HANK: Sure. What'll gonna be for you, boss?

HARSHAW: Er . . . I'll have my special. The regular thing.

HANK (puzzled): Hah?

HARSHAW: My special. Would you mind bending a little closer, Hank?

HANK: Sure, Hukkay. (Unintelligible whispering) Oh, shure, boss! (Shouts) Wan Hambur-r-r-k wit' greeled hunnion hon rye! Wan spashul for Doc! Make queek!

VOICE (distant): Commink hupp!

HANK: I be right out, boss.

HARSHAW: All right, Hank. No rush. (Slight pause. Harshaw whistles softly) Well, kid, this isn't much, but it's a lot better than St. Luke's or emergency clinic, eh?

ALLEN: Stop it, Doc. I've been a fool.

HARSHAW: I was coming around to that. But I was going to call it something else. Extreme youth, or something like that. It's a condition we all go through between the ages of, say, eighteen and thirty-five. Roughly, that.

ALLEN (laughing a little): Roughly is right.

SOUND: Monotonous ticking of large clock grows louder as silence continues.

ALLEN: Maybe I ought to go back.

HARSHAW: I don't know. Some get over the disease quickly, and seldom have relapses. Up to the individual!

HANK: Here komm! Hamburk wit' greeled hunnion!

SOUND: Dishes slam down on counter.

HANK: Anda wan spashul for Doc! Haw, haw, haw, haw . . .

SOUND: Slide of dishes and fade-out of Hank laughing.

HARSHAW (with strange melancholy, slowly): One special for Doc. Days without end. One special for Doc.

ALLEN (with dawning amazement and comprehension): One special . . . for . . . Doc! You! Warm milk . . . and . . . buttered toast. Warm milk . . .

HARSHAW (in same sad voice): You see? Do you understand now?

ALLEN (dazed): I . . . I see! For life. Warm milk and buttered toast.

HARSHAW: And gruel. Don't forget the gruel.

ALLEN (agitated): I . . . I don't think . . . I want my sandwich. I'm going, Doc. I've got to go. Sorry . . . Doc . . .

HARSHAW: Yes, boy. Go. Go back to her . . . to Julie . . . She needs you and wants you as badly as you need and want her. Wait for her if you must. She'll wait, too. But go back.

ALLEN: I'm going. You bet I am! So long. I'll be seeing you.

HARSHAW (softly): Good-night.

ALLEN (hesitating): Thanks. And . . . I'm sorry about . . . you know. Awful sorry.

HARSHAW: It's all right, kid. Good-night.

ALLEN: Good-night. And thanks.

HARSHAW (calling after him): . . . And give her my love!

SOUND: Door slams hard.

HARSHAW (sighs): Hmmmmmmmm. Crazy kid. Lucky he came to me. I guess I handled that prescription all right! (Chuckles softly, then shouts) Hey, Hank!

HANK (off-mike): Commink, boss!

HARSHAW (shouting): Hank! Let's see some food. I'll have a steak an inch thick, with mushrooms and fried potatoes. And a gallon of tough coffee, as usual! And for heaven's sake, take this awful-looking stuff out of my sight, will ya!

Music: Up full.



**M**ILDRED LUCKIE'S short short story is about your favorite fall sport. You'll enjoy it—like pumpkin in season. You'll also be intrigued by the choice of vivid, meaningful details with which Mildred creates her situation. Notice her clever use of the surprise ending.

### Football Fancies

She was sitting in the grandstand, quite inconspicuous, and yet the unmasked glow of adoration in her eyes seemed to set her apart from the other spectators. He was down there on the field, an identical counterpart of the others in the same green-and-yellow uniform, but she had no trouble in picking him out. He was standing, tense and waiting, and an inner sense told her that something was amiss in this last quarter of the game. The score in the fourth down held little meaning for her; she only knew that he was fighting to regain a courage which was almost lost to him.

Once he looked up at her and smiled, a grave, friendly smile, and her heart rebounded with the infinite joy of knowing he knew she was there. She longed to utter a word, just one word of courage and hope, and yet she could find no way to tell him how she felt.

Then it happened! The flash of something hurtling through the air, a quick maneuver of the perfectly co-ordinated figures on the field, a long, tense moment of breathtaking silence, and then a scream, a cheer, a wild frenzy of joy swept the grandstand. The game was over, and he had won it for them! Her whole body quivered with the excitement of the moment, as she caught sight of him, his arms opened wide to receive her. With a cry of joy, she ran out onto the field and threw herself into his embrace.

"Oh, you wonderful pooch!" he cried happily as she wriggled in his grasp in an attempt to lick his face. "Gosh, you're the best mascot this team ever had!"

**Mildred Luckie, 16**

Phoenix Union (Ariz.) High School  
Teacher, R. B. Willard

### See Yourself in Print in Literary Cavalcade

● *Literary Cavalcade* welcomes original writing by all high school students, the best of which will be published in "Young Voices." Writers whose work appears in the magazine will receive a copy of *Saplings*, a collection of the best student writing of previous years. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Young Voices Editor, if you wish your contribution returned. Individual comment and criticism will be given at the editor's discretion, when requested. Writing may be in prose or poetry. The material submitted will be automatically considered for prizes in the annual Scholastic Writing Awards. Run on both a regional and a national basis, the Awards bring recognition to outstanding students and honor to their schools and teachers. There are over 20 classifications, explained in a rules booklet supplied to your teacher. The May, 1950, issue of *Literary Cavalcade* will be the Student Achievement issue.

# Young Voices

## Selections Contributed by Student Writers

Do you know what poets and critics of poetry mean when they speak of the "sustained metaphor"? Joyce Rasmussen's free-verse poem, "The Flood," is a fine example.

### The Flood

A giant dragon  
Creeps silently upon the town  
Under cover of the black night.  
Its tongue licks greedily,  
Tasting the bases of the houses  
Before crushing them between its teeth  
Or lashing out with its tail  
To wreck and destroy.  
With its sides gorged and its ego satisfied,  
It departs, leaving rubble and ruin  
behind.

**Joyce Rasmussen, 17**

Missoula (Mont.) County High School  
Teacher, Helen K. Fink

Dorothy Coyne's familiar essay makes no pretensions to being anything but a piece of engaging nonsense. Don't look for technical "stunts" or hidden meanings!

### Home Sweet Houseboat Solves Housing Problem

The newsprint leaped up at me: "The answer to your housing problem—our steel-hulled houseboat, equipped with everything needed in the modern home." Brother, if you've lived with two aunts, three cousins, four uncles, momma, poppa, one sister, two brothers, a dog, and a canary, any solution

to the housing problem would be acceptable. Impatiently I read on. Here was the promise of everything from a cast-iron anchor to ship fasteners for your toothbrushes—all for the trifling figure of \$9,000.

When our special delegation visited the department store which had run the ad, aunts, cousins, and uncles gasped with delight over this floating wonder. Our next stop was the bank. A threat to take up permanent residence right there in the lobby was enough to get my brother's GI loan granted after four months of waiting, instead of the customary four years.

The salesman at the store had neglected to mention the \$500 fee for hauling our 30-foot palace from Fulton Street down to Erie Basin. But what was \$500 to a bunch of plutocrats like us? We borrowed the 500 bucks from another relative and took up residence in Gowanus Canal.

Now I ask you, have you ever told a prospective date to call for you at 8:30? Sure you have. But when he asked, "What's your address?" did you answer, "Right now the wind and sea are with us, but if they should veer, we'll have to heave over and hit the leeward side"? I did.

Have you ever started to bake a cake only to find you were out of sugar? All you did then was run next door and borrow some from Mrs. Jabowsky. The first day I baked on the houseboat, our only neighbor had just hoisted anchor and left to spend the winter on the Manhattan side. It's less windy there.

We paid \$75 a month wharfage; \$1.50 per telephone message, ship to shore; 22 cents per gallon for gasoline (which lasts exactly one hour steady traveling); and 10 dollars every three weeks for a bottle of fuel oil, plus 25 cents deposit on the bottle. These were just a few of our problems.

Our dog was quite a bother at first. There just wasn't any place to walk him. We settled that though. We taught him how to swim.

Came the night I put a penny in the fuse box. A fuse had blown, and we

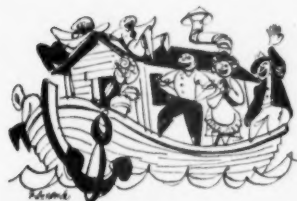


were moored about two miles off the Jersey coast. That did it. The resulting blast made headlines in all the Jersey papers.

We are now living in an abandoned warehouse. It's nice there. No taxes. No high winds. We're thinking of staying permanently.

**Dorothy Coyne, 15**

Prospect Heights H.S.  
Brooklyn, N. Y.



Last Spring, Mary Mathisson sent in a very funny review of Henry Morgan's radio show. Our Awards judges liked it so well they gave it a fourth prize. Why not send us an interpretation—in prose or poetry—of your favorite radio show?

### Strictly Wish Fulfillment

In this modern world of the Toni and L.S.M.F.T., there exists, unbelievably enough, a group of people who are nauseated by Portia, bored by Stop the Music, tired of most commercials, and just plain revolted by the things that modern life seems to condone and even at times, reverse.

In this group, there are few entertainers worthy of consideration as lasting humorists. The leader of these few, the High Priest of Satire, the master of the finely turned sneer at what we cheerfully swallow whole, is Henry Morgan. If you've ever heard Morgan, you doubtless know that he is not at all reticent about telling anyone just what he thinks is wrong with radio.

"Satire is the curved mirror of truth," and Morgan's late program consisted of mature, often inspired, satire that hit on the essence of many matters worthy of investigation. Some of his basically serious topics were "The Grammar School Child: Why Is He Trying to Overthrow the Government?" (a take-off on educational methods); "True Lies" (about a "confessions" magazine); and "Dr. Morgan's Trouble Clinic." And, of course, Morgan's treatment of commercials is more or less common knowledge. About Rayve he once remarked, "Rayve Creme Shampoo is not a soap; it's a—well, a thing. Wash your hair with it for two or three years and if you don't like it, stop using

it." He also said, "It'll remove dandruff—but you'll get it back. If it's all the same to you, use Rayve Creme Shampoo."

Here are a few selections that illustrate the Morgan point of view about commercials for his show: "Fleemies, the pills eight out of ten doctors use in their sling shots"; "Do you wanta be a schlemiel all your life? Sell things our factory's overstocked with"; and "Old maids! Why is this girl being kissed like you've always wanted to be kissed? Because she smells good. Get Clutch Me, at ten cents a quart."

Another feature that Morgan took obvious delight in was "Dr. I.J., the Mental Fox." Following is a bit of dialogue from "Dr. I.J.":

"Is Abraham Lincoln dead or alive?"

"Dead."

"Ooooo, I'm sorry. I think you'll find in all history books that Abraham Lincoln lives in the hearts of all of us. But a fistful of Buts Nuts to that lady!"

"Doctor, I have a gentleman."

"Give that gentleman eighty-four dollars."

"Why?"

"He's my brother. There'll be no cheating on this program!"

In addition to this wonderful feeling for satire, Morgan also has a fine sense of timing and a facility in dialects that enhance the work he does. I have just heard that he's getting another show of



his own soon.\* It's my contention that if radio would let Morgan alone and if he could reach enough listeners, we might soon see a much-needed revolution in the whole industry.

**Mary J. Mathisson, 16**

Seattle (Wash.) High School  
Teacher, Ann E. Graves

\*He already has—on NBC, Friday, at 9 P.M.—ED.

And here's a humorous poem by Jane Fuga on a familiar theme.

### In Preparation

Quick, quick, Mom,  
I've got a date!  
I don't want him  
To have to wait.  
I'll take a bath

And fix my hair  
While you find something  
For me to wear.  
I don't think I like that sweater—  
Don't you think that this is better?  
But this skirt matches the other.  
What am I going to do, Mother?  
Oh, there he is.  
And after all that bother  
What does he wear?  
Jeans—oh, brother!

**Jane Fuga**

Lyons Township H. S.  
La Grange, Ill.  
Teacher, Grace Christopherson

Here's a piece that seems to tie in with the theory that poetry can often be interpreted in several different ways, based on the reader's experience.

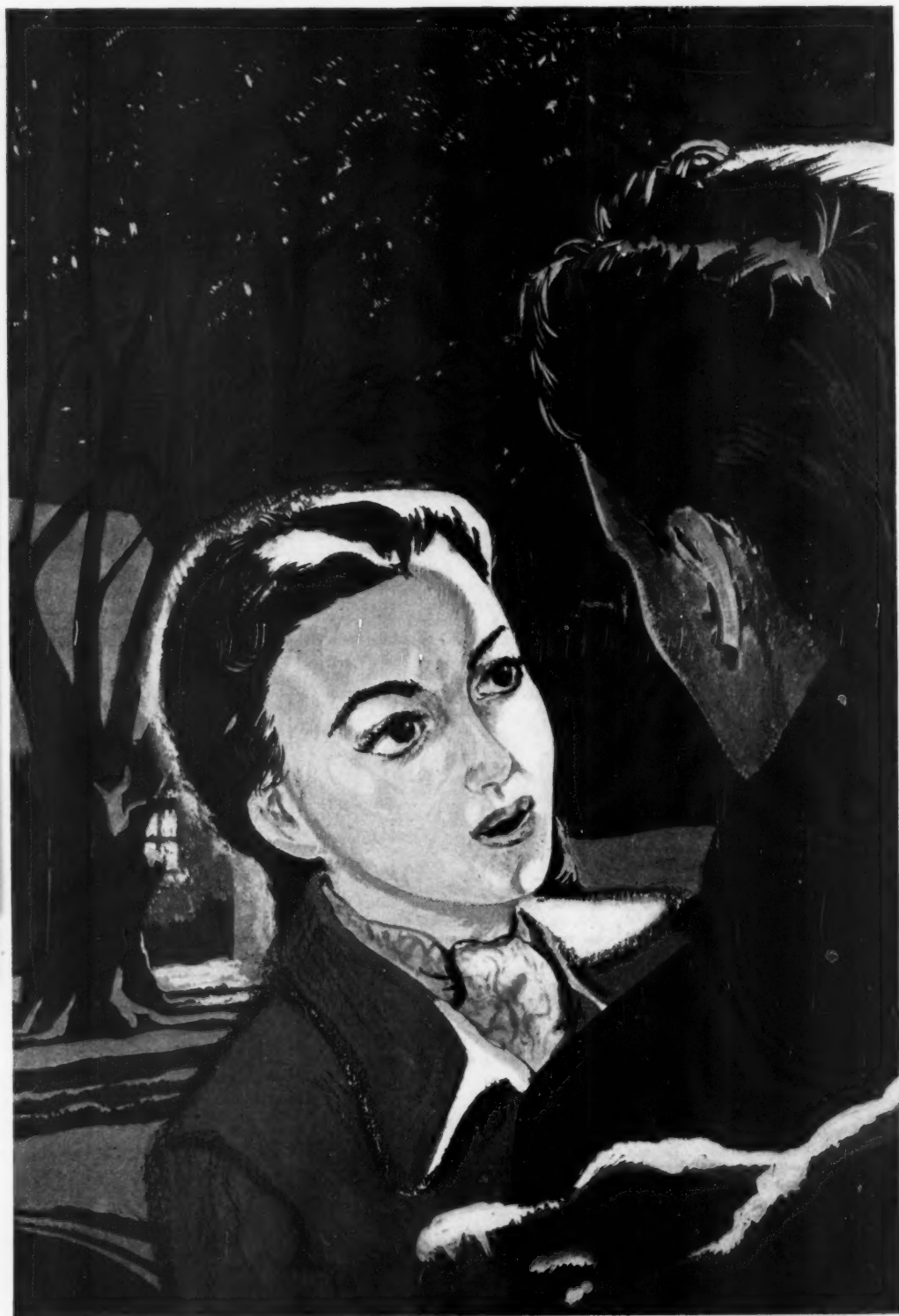
Who is "Martin's Friend"? A real person who subtly controls Martin's opinions and attitudes? Or Martin's other self, the reverse side of his own nature? Whatever meaning you ascribe to Phillip Zeidenberg's fascinating and enigmatic free-verse poem, you'll agree that this is fine figurative characterization. Phillip won a fourth prize for poetry in the Scholastic Writing Awards of 1949.

### Martin's Friend

Man is a reed, but Martin was more;  
Martin was a fog of thought,  
He was a whisper of freedom walking  
with the blind,  
He was a smattering of beauty in a  
night-soaked land,  
He was white lace on a savage throat.  
When I was Martin's friend, he stormed  
and goggled  
And grew green-eyed at my ignorance.  
He scoffed and laughed and bound me  
to the moon.  
And when the man returned, with him  
was his new friend.  
His keen black eyes sliced me,  
His sharp blade-words stabbed me.  
This was Martin's friend.  
And he was wiser than the eyeless Odin.  
He was a slashing scimitar.  
He was not a reed.  
Aye, Martin's friend was Martin's,  
Martin-made, Martin's man,  
Always together.  
Till glassy-eyed, once I saw standing  
alone,  
Sphinx-like, without his fellow pyramid,  
Martin's friend.  
And I knew  
Martin's friend was Martin's master.

**Phillip Zeidenberg, 16**

Abraham Lincoln High School  
Brooklyn, N. Y.  
Teacher, Mr. S. Lapodoss



Book condensation in the author's own words;  
the warm and tender and humorous  
story of a Russian-American family

By JESSICA WELLNER

Illustrations by Charles Beck

# A Time for Laughter

## Nikolai the Second and the Bar of Soap

It is all very well for a human being to be poor, Papa said. He has hopes. But a horse! It is a very bad thing for a horse to belong to a poor man, even a poor young man. For the horse is a clever animal; it is aware that its life is not for long, and though the young man has hope of bettering himself, the horse knows it will be too late to do him any good.

Mama also had a theory about being poor. The main thing, she said, was never to feel poor, and to be very clean. And on those days when the borsht was thin and the cabbage soup only cabbage, Mama polished the silverware or the furniture with special vigor.

When I was about four, my parents suddenly decided they had been poor long enough. "Rodan," Mama said, "you are a clever, handsome man. It is not necessary for you to work in the steel mill."

"Fine, fine," Papa said. "I thank you, my dear, for the compliment. But what is it I am to do?"

"Be a businessman," Mama said.

So Papa bought a wagon and a very tired old horse whom he named Nikolai, and he became a businessman, peddling fruits and vegetables. He grew a small but fierce-looking mustache for his new role; the housewives liked his brigandish good looks and gallant ways, and he had an immediate success.

All went well until winter came and the fruit and vegetable business went

into a slump. Papa did odd jobs and Nikolai stood in his stable at the back of the house, useless, dejected, but of good appetite.

All through the lean months Papa and Mama budgeted for the horse, too. Sometimes the horse fared a little better than the rest of us, until he got ticks and a terrible itching of the hide. Uncle Stepan said the animal should be bathed at least once a week with a good, mild soap. "Otherwise, Rodan," he said, "the poor animal will get much worse."

A good bar of soap cost a nickel. Mama's tight budget allowed her one bar for laundry and scrubbing each week. "Well," she said, "I will scrub a little harder and do my work with half a bar. The rest can go to Nikolai."

"There now, boy," Papa would say, "we'll get you all fixed up in fine shape, and when spring comes you and I will go out and make much money, and we will laugh at this bad time."

Nikolai would whinny, looking most intelligent, and Papa and Mama would gaze proudly at their large investment, for he had cost them almost every penny of their savings.

At last it was spring. Papa decided one evening to get up at four o'clock the following morning, go to the commission market, and begin the new season. He was eating his rolls and coffee by the light of the kerosene lamp when I woke up and stumbled sleepily into the warm kitchen.

"Well, Gnessia," Papa shouted, "you have come to wish Papa good luck for the first day, yes? Come." he said to Mama, "put her little coat on her and we will all go into the yard and she can watch me hitch up Nikolai."

The newly polished wagon lamp made a bright ring of light around the orange wagon and old Nikolai.

Mama said, "My, Rodan, that horse certainly looks good and healthy. Now I do not mind having had to give him half my laundry bar all winter."

Papa hitched the horse to the wagon and inspected everything carefully. He threw a kiss to us, and when he gaily "Cid-yapped" to Nikolai, Mama and I quickly moved out of the path so we would not be run over by this dashing vehicle. Nothing happened "Cid-yap, Nikolai!" Papa shouted, wishing to make an imposing departure. And Nikolai at last moved slowly, ever so slowly, forward. He took perhaps four steps, sighed deeply and shudderingly, and sank slowly to the ground. Nikolai, gallant horse and partner had waited to die in harness.

Papa did not go to the commission house that day, but on the next he borrowed some money and bought Nikolai the Second. This was a good-luck horse, young and sound, and he and Papa were successful together.

When we moved from Milwaukee to the small Wisconsin town which was to be our real home, Nikolai the Second went with us, and also a partner for him, a matching gray named, in most Amerikanski style, Bill.

Papa and Nikolai and Bill were gone for six weeks, prospecting for the new home.

One rainy September evening Grand-papa, Mama, and I were drinking our tea in front of a brisk fire in the parlor stove.

"Well, Pa," Mama said, getting up to light the lamps, "Rodan will surely

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be home soon now. Sometimes I wish he will not find what he is looking for in the wilderness."

Grandpapa waited until the room glowed with light. "What is it you fear, Tatyana?" he said.

"We will be strangers, Pa, complete strangers in a new place where there are none of us. We speak another tongue, and we remember things they cannot know."

"Life is not to remember but to learn," Grandpapa said. "Here you live in a small island of Europe. The tongues and minds still cling to the old ways. In a place of real Amerikanski, Gnessia will grow up a real child of the land, and you also, though you think you are so old and wise."

When I awoke the next morning, it was a wild, stormy day of high winds and thin clouds. Some of the unrest had come into the house. Papa had come home in the night and already it seemed that we no longer lived here, but in that new place he talked about so eagerly.

Papa looked thin and tired, not as rosy as before, but his voice was bigger than ever. "Ey, Gness!" he yelled. "Come give Papa a big kiss and I will tell you how you are to be a princess in a new land."

"Tatyana!" Papa boomed. "You should see—such a house as I have rented. Eight rooms."

"Eight rooms!" Mama cried. "What do we want with eight rooms?"

"We will need them," Papa said grandly. "I am going to be a big man in this new world."

"You should see it," Papa said. "Grass in front, and a barn for the horses and a place for a garden in the back. Also, bushes of berries and three little plum trees. An estate, eh? And the house! It will be white, when we paint it. It sits on a high street at the top of a hill, and wherever the eye looks there are more hills, large and small. Below is the town, Rich Valley, painted houses with gardens. On Saturdays the square in the center of the town is filled with the wagons of the farm people for miles around. There is a nickel show"—Papa smiled at Mama, for she loved to go to the movies—"and a stand in the center of the square where musicians make music on summer evenings. All around the town is a narrow brown river, like a circlet of bronze. It is fine, eh, Tatyana?"

Mama looked thoughtful. "The words are fine," she said. "Beyond the town what is there, Rodan?"

"To one side, rich lands with fat animals."

"And on the other side?"

"Wilderness," Papa said, "a beautiful

wilderness. Tall trees and lakes. There are men called trappers who harvest the deep woods and rivers. That will be our new living, Tatyana. I will buy the furs and skins of animals. In summer I will buy hides and tallow and wool from the farmers. It will be a good life, Tatyana, and a good living."

Mama thought about this for a while. Then she said, "And the people?"

"Fine people," Papa said, "Americans. They speak good English. Already I have learned a new phrase, 'Appy Days!' One says it in greeting, 'Appy Days!' he shouted."

Papa started for Rich Valley the following morning, after loading the wagon with most of the household goods. It would take him a week, perhaps two, to get there, depending on the weather. Mama and I were to follow by train as soon as he sent us word.

We had a special fine breakfast and too soon it was time for Papa to go.

"God ride with you, my son," Grandpapa said.

Papa had said goodbye to us all and was calling to the horses when Mama cried excitedly, "Rodan, Rodan, I almost forgot. Wait a minute!"

Skirts flying, she ran into the house. She came out quickly with a small bundle wrapped in a red and white checked towel. "Here, Rodan," she said, "when you go into our new house, place this in the kitchen. Without fail, don't forget."

"What is it?" Papa said.

"A loaf of bread and a box of salt. So that our new home will never want for food."

"Our new home will never want for love, Tatyana," Papa said. Then he looked away very quickly, his cheeks glowing. He switched the horses smartly, and drove off without one backward look.

### Turkey a la Russe

"Turkey land, gobble, gobble, turkey land," went the peculiarly piercing song we were learning for Thanksgiving. For days now the fifth grade had been preparing for the holiday.

"We're having a thirty-pound turkey," said fat Mary Brown. "Oh, boy, we always have to run around the block a couple times so we can eat the pie and fruit cake."

All the kids were talking about what they were going to have for Thanksgiving dinner.

"What are you having?" Mary asked me.

"Oh, turkey, of course," I lied.

It was a terrible lie, because not only were we not having a turkey, but

I had never seen one, much less tasted one.

"Mama," I said that evening at the supper table, "next Thursday is Thanksgiving Day."

"Yes," Mama said, "that is very nice. You will not have to go to school that day. It is a great holiday."

"What are we going to have to eat?" I said, a plan forming in my mind.

"Why, I do not yet know," Mama said. "We will have something special, like on a Sunday, perhaps. Papa will be at home all day also. We will make a little occasion."

"Americans eat turkey on Thanksgiving Day," I said.

"I think," Mama said quietly, "it is possible to be an American and not eat turkey on Thanksgiving." Then, as if the matter were closed, she turned to Papa, saying, "Rodan, shall I pour you some more tea?"

Papa looked thoughtful, tugging at his mustache. "No, thanks, my dear," he said absently, as if he were thinking of something else.

"Have you ever eaten of this turkey animal?" Papa said to Mama.

"I have not," Mama said. "It looks like a buzzard, Rodan. I should think it would have a strange, wild taste."

"Please, Papa," I cried, sensing an ally, "please let's have a turkey." And I added shrewdly, "Let's be real Americans!"

Mama was weakening, it was plain to see. She pinched her pretty, soft lips together, trying not to smile as she said sternly, "Well, I will not be an outsider in this Thanksgiving business. Very well, Rodan, if you will procure a turkey, I will prepare the beast."

"Oh, Mama," I cried, "and can we have cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie and all the other things, too—just like a real Thanksgiving?"

"But naturally," Mama said. "If we are going to do it, we will do it correctly."

The next day, the day before Thanksgiving, Papa went into the country in the Ford to get a turkey. When I came home from school, the house was silent, but I heard excited voices in the back yard. Running out, I saw Papa and Mama and quite a number of our neighbors gathered around a large wire cage. It was the turkey—the largest, finest turkey in the whole county, Papa said. Everyone commented on its great size, and Ollie, the animal killer, was there to kill the bird.

Ollie was the strongest man in forty counties; it was said he could kill a steer with one blow of his great fist. He made his living by trapping, and by killing aged horses and cows for their hides. But I don't think Ollie had ever



handled a turkey before. He swaggered up to the cage, a sure-fire killer, and Mama said to me, "Come, my dear, we will go into the house. I have many things to do." Papa looked after us.

We heard a screeching and a beating of wings, and a shout went up. "Well," I thought, "it's dead."

Papa burst into the house. "Tatyana," he said, laughing hard, "the turkey got away from Ollie—you should see his face! Come outside."

We ran out, and there, across the street, on the topmost spire of the First Baptist Church, sat our Thanksgiving turkey. Ollie was hopping mad, shaking his great red fist at the bird and swearing.

"Ollie," Papa said sternly, "my ladies are present."

Mr. Brown, our neighbor, said that we should call the fire department, but Papa said, "No, we will remain calm," and Mama nodded approvingly. "The bird will 'ave to come down sometime," Papa said.

"Nitchivo," [It doesn't matter] Mama said, laughing, and went into the house to prepare supper.

All the rest of the evening, the turkey sat on the pinnacle of the church. Though the next day was a holiday, and I could have stayed up much later than usual, I went to bed early. "Nitchivo" nothing, I thought angrily.

I never really knew what happened to our first turkey. When I awoke, late, after a restless sleep, and ran to the window to look for the bird, it was gone.

"Where did it go, Papa?" I asked.

"It may have flown home," Papa said. "It was very strong and it wanted to live very much."

We had a large omelet with fresh mushrooms (very fancy, Mama said) for our Thanksgiving dinner. Afterward we had pumpkin pie and little chocolate turkeys filled with orange-colored fondant which Papa had bought for me. We were very festive, and Papa made a little speech.

"This is Thanksgiving Day," he said, "a most Amerikanski occasion. And I am thinking"—looking at me, his oddly slanting Tartar eyes very serious—"I am thinking that we who have come to America from a foreign land know more about that first Thanksgiving than any other people. We may not know about the eating of turkeys and such things—I hung my head, ashamed—"but those first thanksgivers were from a foreign land also. And furthermore, Gnessia, little girls whose parents come to America from another land are most especially Amerikanski. You are born an American because your papa and mama said to themselves, 'We do not like

how things are in the old country.' And out of all the countries in the world, we chose America to be your birthplace. Do you understand, *dushenka*?"

"Yes, Papa!" I cried, very glad. Now I knew the deeper meaning of Mama's "nitchivo."

### My Evil Eye

All the other aunts and uncles, on both sides of the family, looked upon my aunt Elisabeta as a kind of phenomenon. She was feared for her sudden, unpredictable temper, admired for her gifted cooking and looked upon with awe and apprehension for her fertility: every two years, in the spring, Elisabeta had a baby. Elisabeta and my uncle Constantin were proud of their



### About the author . . .

● Jessica Wellner was born in Milwaukee but after graduating from the University of Wisconsin she took a newspaper and radio job in Hawaii. There she met Charles Wellner, a newspaperman. They were married twelve years ago. She has since kept house in Honolulu, Mexico City, Taxco, Cuernavaca, and today Buffalo, New York, where her husband heads the Associated Press Bureau.

"I don't feel rootless and transient," says Mrs. Wellner. "I feel I have a dozen home towns instead of one."

She is a good cook and thinks "food is awfully important." When not cooking, she is at work on a second book.



large family (they finally had sixteen).

Elisabeta, as it happened, liked none of us. But it was for Grandpapa that she kept her deepest dislike. The beautiful old man, scholarly and gentle, was so remote from her violence and purely functional existence that his very presence seemed to rile her. He gave her, on the few occasions he could not avoid her presence, the same gentle courtesy he had for everyone, but she hated him.

Grandpapa died at our house. The family burial plot was in Milwaukee, and we took him there on the train. Uncle Constantin, as oldest son, had the honor of having Grandpapa buried from his house. The men placed Grandpapa's casket in the room with the grand piano and the damask divan. I resented terribly that he should lie there, in that house where he had not been welcome in life, and that Elisabeta should go about, smirking and pious, at his last hours in the world.

After the funeral, Mama, knowing a little of my grief and unaware of my feeling for my aunt, decided it would be good for me to spend the weekend

in that jolly house full of children. She and Papa would stay with my aunt Maryusha and I with Elisabeta.

All might have been well had it not been for my aunt's unfortunate tongue, for I loved to be with my cousins and thought my uncle Constantin sweet and much put upon. Elisabeta first stuffed me with cakes and goodies, then, "Don't grieve so, child," she said. "He was an old man, no good for anything. He had lived out his life. He was only a burden."

At her words, I felt an anger and horror such as I have never since experienced. Striking out, out of that deep, unchildlike hate for her meanness, I happened to hit on her one weakness—her terrible peasant superstition.

I stood up. "You, Aunt Elisabeta," I said, "you are an evil woman to speak so of my grandpapa. And now listen. I am telling you something. Whenever you sleep, you will dream, and all your dreams, terrible dreams, will be of Grandpapa. Always and always you will see him, and you will be afraid. And that room with the piano—you will be afraid to go in there because he will be there. Elisabeta, I curse you and my grandfather curses you."

She was terrified. She grew littler before my eyes, and in a trembling voice she screamed, "Out of my house, evil eye! Small demon, go—go before I split your skull!"

I was frightened at what I had done and ran weeping to Maryusha's followed by her hoarse cries. I was ashamed to tell Mama and Papa about it, and said only that I wanted to be with them.

Soon I almost forgot the scene. After all, my aunt was noted for her violent tempers, and the memory became, after a time, just a part of the sorrow of my grandfather's death.

Elisabeta, however, did not forget. One summer night, about four months after the incident, Mama received a strange telephone call from her.

"Send Gnessia to me tomorrow," she said. "Fyodor must go to the hospital to have his tonsils removed."

"But why do you want Gnessia?" Mama asked, puzzled. "It is a far trip for a small girl to make alone on the train. I cannot come; I have a houseful of company."

"Because she has the evil eye! Nothing has gone right for me since she cursed me."

"What is this?" Mama asked, annoyed.

"Just ask her!" Elisabeta shrieked into the telephone. "But, Tatyana, I implore you, send her. I am afraid to take Fyodor to hospital without her."

I told Mama, very shamefaced, but laughing, what had happened, but Mama did not think it was funny.

"My dear," Mama said, "you have frightened your aunt badly. I guess," she sighed, "I'll have to send you there."

"Now mind," Mama said as she put me on the train, "be very kind to your aunt and look at her nicely out of those big solemn eyes." She kissed me, and said, "You don't have the evil eye, do you, Gnessia?"

"Oh, no, Mama," I said seriously.

Elizabeta greeted me with all the pomp of an African chief greeting a visiting witch doctor. Nothing was too good for me, or too much trouble. All my favorite dishes had been prepared. The children avoided me, speaking to me only when they had to, as if I were a grownup aunt. About noon we went to the hospital and Fyodor's tonsils were removed without mishap. The next afternoon he was brought home. Elizabeta herself took me to the station and thanked me for my kindness.

By this time I was so puffed up with self-importance that I could not resist asking her, "Aunt," I said cruelly, "do you dream?"

She paled and did not look at me. "I dream," she said.

After that, whenever there was illness or trouble in the house of Elizabeta, I was called first, like a physician. When there was sorrow, I was treated with fear and respect. As the years went by, I wanted very much to speak to my aunt about her obsession, but I could never find the words.

Elizabeta softened with the years; she became gentler and kinder. She went often, they said, to Grandpapa's grave, though she never, to my knowledge, spoke of him to anyone. When she died in childbed, some years after the incident, I was greatly saddened, for I was almost grownup and the years had softened me, too. I knew I had added, who knows how much, to the troubles of a nervous, unhappy little woman with my "evil eye."

#### Mr. Tchaikovsky and Mr. Tolstoy

Mama said my aunt Annushka's apartment needed a good turning out. Cousin Mischa said it was Annushka's mind which needed airing. Papa said, "What is there to talk about? Poor creature, she is a little yellow bird."

If a canary grew almost five feet tall, had a little pink nose instead of a beak, and wore long, flowing skirts, it would look a great deal like my aunt Annushka. Even in middle life she retained the bright yellow color of her hair and a birdlike, innocent, questioning look. She had tiny, stemlike arms,

and the flowing sleeves she affected added to the picture of a creature always in motion. She moved with a rustling flutter and she was constantly though quietly moving—eating, laughing, talking—busy, busy, busy.

Whenever we went to the city to visit the relatives, we paid a special visit of ceremony to Annushka. She was so quiet and refined it did my heart good to know there was someone so delicate in our lusty family. She is the only woman I've ever known who could blow her nose elegantly.

She lived in three small, bright rooms over Mr. Galinski's grocery store. All the family chipped in so much a month for Annushka's care. She was not at all old or feeble, but so fragile that no per-



Papa Raden

son, even the grossest, could imagine her going out into the world to make a living. She and her ancient cat and even more ancient canary lived, as it were, in a large, bright cage. She was inordinately fond of everything yellow, and when I had passed through the dark hallway it was like entering a strange, aerial world. Even the smell of cat, bird, and velvet draperies long uncleared was not unpleasant.

Annushka greeted Papa and Mama gaily, with many little flutterings and bobbings, but she welcomed me into her charmed yellow world with every bit of the love she had left over from her yellow bird and yellow cat.

"My dear, my dear," she cried in her light voice which was not chirrupy but a tender warble. When we embraced, it gave me the same feeling as when I held a frightened bird in my palm.

"Come, my dear," she said, taking my hand, "see how Mr. Tchaikovsky is waiting for your greeting. And Mr. Tolstoy—notice with what dignity he waits for you to pay your respects."

I always felt a little silly about pay-

ing my respects to Mr. Tchaikovsky, eying me so cockily from his swinging perch. Papa always watched this scene curiously. Mama sat very straight, her feet primly close together. She smiled gently, listened politely to Annushka's remarks.

It was easier to say hello to Mr. Tolstoy. A cat, I felt, was more of a person than a canary. He was so dignified and beautiful, his watered-silk fur even more plushy than the saffron-yellow pillow upon which he lay. Mr. Tolstoy was old and of great presence and intelligence. He and Tchaikovsky got on very well together, but it was plain that this was so only because of Tolstoy's wisdom and forbearance. Even when Annushka set the bird free in the room, it was safe with Tolstoy.

This had not been true of Tolstoy's predecessor, also Tolstoy, who had brought a terrible happening into Annushka's life. It was hard to imagine that time now. The dreadful thing had happened long ago, but Mama said it had left its mark on Annushka—she was never quite the same after that.

Annushka had let the bird out of its cage, and for a time it fluttered about, enjoying its freedom. The Tolstoy of that time lay quietly on his pillow. It was a golden, warm spring day and as Annushka sat over her embroidery she grew drowsier and drowsier. The sun struck hotly through the dusty, yellow-hung windows. The bird settled near Annushka's embroidery scissors, its favorite, glinting spot, and dozed uneasily. Annushka's eyes closed, opened now and again to blink lovingly at the little creature, then remained shut. She slept. Mr. Tolstoy lay very still; only his long whiskers vibrated once in a while. His beautiful wild eyes were closed. It appeared that Mr. Tolstoy also slept. A more peaceful scene may not be imagined.

Annushka awoke, she never knew how much later, to find the room dim and cool. She awoke, she said afterward, with a strange, tense feeling in her throat and chest, as if she had swallowed something. She closed her lips tightly, annoyed that she had been sleeping with her mouth open, so undignified. She looked about for Tchaikovsky. Tolstoy slept peacefully on his pillow. As Annushka began to whistle for the bird, Mr. Tolstoy opened one eye in annoyance at the disturbance, then went peacefully back to sleep. Annushka looked everywhere for the bird. She checked the windows; all were closed or well screened. She looked in the closets, in the cupboards, under the stove, in the stove. After a long time she knew that Tchaikovsky was not in the apartment. For one dreadful moment,

the fraction of a moment, a terrible question entered her mind—Mr. Tolstoy?

"Mr. Tolstoy," she said apologetically, "you did not—you could not have—"

Tolstoy gazed at her wisely, reproachfully.

"My poor friend," Annushka said, "forgive me. I am beside myself." She clutched her throat, put a hand to her fluttering chest. "Oh!" A violent, unacceptable thought came to her. She dashed suddenly from the room, rushing down the steep stairs to Mr. Galinski's grocery. Her long, silky garments made a sound like lightly beating wings.

Mr. Tolstoy carefully licked a pink spot on his chest, but no one was there to see him.

"Mr. Galinski," Annushka cried, "oh, Mr. Galinski, I have swallowed Mr. Tchaikovsky!" She held both thin hands to her throat and strangled chirps came from it.

"What are you saying, Annushka?" Mr. Galinski cried. "You do not mean you cooked and ate your small bird!"

Annushka looked at him wildly. "I slept," she said, "and Tchaikovsky flew into my mouth and I—I swallowed him. Here—" she grabbed his hand—"feel. Oh, my poor little bird." As if in answer to her cry, faint birdlike notes of protest came from her lips.

"There, there, my dear," Mr. Galinski said kindly. "Of course you didn't swallow the bird. It is hiding somewhere; perhaps it fainted. Perhaps—" he looked at her shrewdly—"perhaps your fine fellow of a cat forgot himself for a moment."

"Mr. Galinski!" Annushka drew herself to her full small height. She spoke the last words she was to utter for a long time. "I do not blame my friends for my difficulties. Oh, no, Mr. Galinski, be sure I will not permit anyone to say that Mr. Tolstoy ate his friend. I—I—"

For many weeks after that Annushka spoke only in faint, tortured bird sounds. She could scarcely eat, she slept only from final exhaustion. Most of her time was spent before a mirror, looking down her throat. The little bird wanted to come out, she said.

"But it will starve if you don't eat," Olga, who had taken charge of Annushka, said reasonably.

The family called a council and it was decided that something drastic must be done, and at once.

"She will either soon die or have to go to the madhouse," said Uncle Stepan. "She is too young to die and no one in our family," he said, "has ever gone to the madhouse. We must think of something quickly."

"It is a case for witchcraft," Grandpapa said.

"Kusil!" cried Stepan. "What talk for

a man of your learning. Witchcraft indeed." Then he added thoughtfully, "Where, I ask you, would you find a witch? This is America, where there are no witches."

"So," Grandpapa said, smiling. "You agree then that there are witches, eh, Stepan? We will be the witches. Listen, I will tell you how we can make magic for our poor Annushka."

Only one prop was needed—a small yellow bird, as like as possible to Tchaikovsky. It was purchased the following morning, and Grandpapa, Stepan, and several others of the family went early to Annushka's apartment. The bird was left in the hall.

Annushka chirruped sadly in greeting.

"My child," Grandpapa said, "we are going to help you to be our own bright Annushka again. You understand?"

She gazed at him dimly but with understanding.

"We are going to release the bird from your throat. I find we are wrong in not believing you. It is true, my dear, as you believe, that you have swallowed Mr. Tchaikovsky. Perhaps"—he smiled gently—"perhaps your little bird is still unharmed. We shall soon see."

Annushka smiled.

"Now lie down, my child," Grandpapa said.

Annushka composed herself gratefully on the sofa.

"Now the scarf," Grandpapa said, holding out his hand to Olga. "We will cover your eyes. You must not look; you have suffered enough. But be of good heart and say a little prayer."

Olga covered all of Annushka's face except her mouth with the scarf. Stepan stood guard at her head to see it did not shift. Now Grandpapa motioned to have the cage brought in from the hall.

"Open your mouth wide, Annushka," he said. "You don't mind if I have to hurt you?"

Annushka shook her head eagerly.

"Now," Grandpapa pressed a teaspoon deep, deep into Annushka's throat. She gagged and retched and Olga looked away fastidiously. Grandpapa nodded to Stepan, who released the bird into Grandpapa's hand and then ran quickly to the hall with the telltale cage.

"Now!" Grandpapa said gladly. "Open your eyes, Annushka. Look."

Annushka threw back the scarf, sat upright, and looked at the canary fluttering in Grandpapa's palm. "Mr. Tchaikovsky!" she cried in her normal voice. "Oh, my dear Mr. Tchaikovsky."

"You may find him a little shy for a while," Grandpapa said. "I would keep him in his cage for some time."

Annushka agreed with bright nods.

"And, my dear," Grandpapa said,

"since you have had such a bad time, I suggest you never again permit yourself to sleep while Tchaikovsky is out of his cage."

After I learned this story about my aunt Annushka I liked her even better than before. Also, I understood why she always was so happy and why her enchanted yellow world was like a cage.

### Otchi Chernia

The Garrisons were the only people in town who had as much company as we did. The people who came to visit the Garrisons, however, were so different from our wanderers and relatives that this did not seem much of a point of comparison. The Garrison guests were successful, handsome, most American-looking people who drove big cars, had soft, unexcited ways and voices. All of them, even the older ones, seemed quite young, not like the grownup people at our house, who were always worried about something. Not unhappy, but worried. Papa was a gay companion and he did not seem really old, but I could not, for instance, imagine Papa playing tennis as Allan Garrison's father did. Nor dancing with Mama to the phonograph, as I had seen the Garrisons do. Papa danced, sometimes, wild Cossackkas, or he would twirl Mama quickly around the room, but this was different, not an exuberant letting off of steam, but a deliberate kind of enjoyment—well, I could just not imagine it!

People said it was Mrs. Garrison who was responsible for all this grandeur. Mr. Garrison's father had been a shrewd country lawyer who had acquired many farms and other property and then founded the Dairymen's Bank. People remembered Bob Garrison, the son, as a nice young fellow, plain and friendly spoken, with no biggery about him. Now he was president of the bank, an icy man with a beautiful, cold-looking wife who went to Chicago to buy all her clothes. Their friends were people from the cities—Madison, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis. The Garrisons were not the richest people in our town, but they had the finest house, the biggest cars, two of them, and by far the grandest manner.

It was fun to walk slowly past the big Garrison house on Grand Avenue and see the way such people lived. In winter I caught glimpses of rich furniture, the uniformed servants, the Garrisons and their guests, always dressed up like people in a movie about rich people.

In summer the Garrisons and their company sat in what Mrs. Garrison called the garden. It looked so gay and yet so quiet. When any of us sat in the

back yard, it sounded like a multitude; someone was sure to get excited about something.

These people have a beautiful time, I thought, but they are so peaceful about it. When I get married and have a house, this is the kind of house I want and the kind of pleasant, easy people I want in it.

The master of my dream house was Allan, only son of the Garrisons. From the seventh grade, until now when we were seniors in high school, he had been my impossible dream. He was so quiet, cool looking, and unforeign. Our names canceled very well, as I had discovered long ago:

#### GNESSIA RODAN—COURTSHIP ALLAN GARRISON—MARRIAGE

I used to dream about the miracle which would somehow occur when I would become beautiful and not at all foreign, just strange enough to be exotic, and Allan would say to me, "Why, I didn't know it before. Our lives are meant to go together."

Until the night of Larry Mitchell's birthday party, however, we hadn't ever said much more than "hello." It was my first real party with invitations sent by mail and I had a new dress and I had rubbed my cheeks with the red silk ribbon I had secreted in my drawer. All this must have made me seem different to Allan, or maybe it was seeing me in the house of Larry's father, who was a judge and very brilliant. At any rate, Allan looked at me often, as if he hadn't seen me before.

When we played post office, I called for Allan.

"Well?" he said, when we were in the little room set aside for the delivery of the kisses.

I offered him my cheek, as I had the other boys.

He took my face in his hands and bent down to kiss me and I turned my head roughly. "I can't," I said miserably.

"O.K.," he said, as if it didn't matter at all.

I thought, "Now he won't ever again pay any attention to me."

But he looked at me even more than before and I felt pretty for the first time in my life. "He likes me! He likes me!" I thought, feeling so happy that I wanted to go out into the cold winter night and throw kisses to the stars and say thank you, thank you, world. When he came over to me, I felt tongue-tied and tried to think of something fascinating to say.

"I like your tie," I said, though I thought it just an ordinary tie.

"Thanks," he said easily, fingering his black bow tie and batwing collar. I

saw a little pulse beating in his smooth thin neck and I could not take my eyes from it. "That is his life," I thought, "his mysterious life beating there," and I had to make myself look away.

"I suppose you think that's a funny thing for a girl to say," I said. "I think that when there's something nice about a person, you should tell them. Don't you?"

"Why, yes," he said. "Of course. Yes, sir." He looked at me with new interest. "Say," he said, "I think you're nice. You're different."

He took me home from the party and before the five-block walk to our house was over, he was in love with me, too. It was very cold, and the snow crunched and squeaked under our galoshes. The sky was full of singing stars. I had never held hands with a boy before, but now I quite naturally put my gloved hand inside his coat pocket and I wanted to go on walking forever in the cold, deep blue, singing night. When we got a few doors from our house, where a porch light burned for me, we paused, as at a command. He took off his gloves and put his thin, strong hands on my shoulders.

"Kiss me until tomorrow," he said.

Now the singing night was stilled and it was only cold and dark. "I can't," I said.

"All right, Gness," he said, and he seemed, for the first time, very grown-up, older than I. "I'll wait," he said.

"Will you let me kiss you?" I said.

He looked surprised. Throwing my arms around him, I put my lips to his smooth neck where I had seen the mysterious pulsing. Then I ran like everything. When I got to the lighted porchway, I could see him standing where I had left him, and when I went inside, he was still there.

Now it was fun to go to sleep, because when I slept I dreamed of Allan. His thin, narrow face, with the deep blue eyes fringed in thick lashes, was always before me. The touch of his thin hands and his voice, surprisingly deep for a boy, were always with me. To enter a classroom when Allan was there was to enter a warm bath, to be wrapped in warmth.

Papa did not permit me to go riding with boys or to go to movies or dances with them, but I could always entertain boys and girls alike at home. We played the piano or the phonograph or made fudge or sometimes joined the frequent pinochle game in the dining room. Allan was, however, an infrequent caller. Our meetings were brief and furtive walks home from orchestra practice or the library. After school we often went to Pete the Greek's and lingered in a dark little booth over a

coke or a sundae. Our friends left us alone. We were known to have a grand crush—I was Allan's girl and he was my boy and almost everyone knew that an aura of tragedy hung over us, though we were ourselves not quite aware of it.

"Why can't you go for a drive with me?" he'd say.

"Papa won't let me. In Europe nice girls don't go out alone with boys unless they're engaged."

"Well, this isn't Europe. Look at all the others."

"Why don't you come over tonight, Allan? We'll sit around and talk."

"All they ever do at your house is talk. I want to be alone with you. All those screwy people always jabbering and yelling!" I must have looked funny, because he added quickly, "I don't mean your folks, Gness, they're awfully nice. I mean those others—like your cousin Mischka," saying the name as if he hated it.

"They're *all* my folks," I said. I suddenly had no appetite for my hot-fudge sundae.

"Well, Mother says—" Allan paused. "What does your mother say, Allan?" quickly.

"Oh, skip it, Gness." He looked worried and unhappy.

"Oh, heck!" he said. "Why do we have to have so much trouble? Your father—and my mother. And you," angrily, "you and your screwy idea that you can't let me kiss you. Come on, let's get out of here."

Now and then I saw Allan's mother and father on the street or in a store and they nodded to me as always. Everybody knew the little Rodan girl. Lately, it had seemed to me that they looked at me closely when we chanced to meet, especially Mrs. Garrison. Papa and I were out one evening, driving along Big Bluff Road, when we saw Allan's mother and another woman coming toward us in her big car. Papa and I had been laughing over some joke, and we smiled and Papa yelled, "Appy Days!" Mrs. Garrison nodded coldly but did not smile, and when I looked back, her friend was looking back after Papa and me.

I thought it strange that Allan did not come over more often, and finally, in anger, he blurted out the truth that his mother didn't want him to come to our house at all. That night I used the India ink to write in my diary. I kept three ink bottles in my desk—bright blue for happy, ordinary entries, red for great happenings and joys, and India for the recording of sorrows. There were few blue entries these days of my love; they were either bright red or pitch black.

Spring came, and spring vacation.



Now our talk was full of the fears of parting when the summer was over. Allan was going to Harvard and I to the University of Wisconsin, only a short distance from home.

"We'll write," Allan said.

"Oh, yes," I said, "love letters," already beginning to compose them in my mind.

"You'll change," he accused me. "You'll let someone kiss you."

"Allan," I said, "when we say goodbye I am going to kiss you so that all the girls at Harvard College will not make you forget me."

"There aren't any girls at Harvard," he said, laughing at me. "Don't worry, Gness, I won't ever forget you—you've caused me too much trouble. Like this party at my house next Saturday. You've got to come."

"Your mother doesn't like me, Allan. She only gave in to you to let me come."

"But you will come—for me, won't you? Mother would like you if she really knew you."

The party was for some friends of the Garrisons, a couple from Chicago, and their daughter, Joan.

"My mother went to school with Mrs. Drake," Allan had said. "And their daughter, Joan—I haven't seen her since we were kids. She goes to Wellesley College. That's near Harvard."

"Is it?" fear clutching at me. "Is she pretty?"

"Heck, no. Spitty braces all over her teeth and freckles all over her face."

As I dressed for the great occasion, I was very glad that this grownup girl who went to Wellesley College was freckled and braced. I was determined to show Mrs. Garrison, once and for all, that I was not just the little Rodan girl who rattled around in a queer knickerbocker suit. Tonight I would be a woman of the world, fitting gracefully into gracious, sophisticated surroundings.

I had a black dress which Papa and I had bought over Mama's serious objections. "She looks like a Frenchwoman in it," Mama said.

"Well, what is wrong with that?" Papa said, twirling his mustache. "I have heard that the French ladies are most charming."

The dress fitted very well, I thought, minimizing as it did my waist, making me look taller and slimmer. I brushed my hair until it shone and added some strong-smelling brilliantine to make it shine some more. Instead of plaiting it as usual in two coils over my ears, I slicked it down, making a large knot at the nape of my neck. Then I brought out two bits of hair over each cheek and made the curlies known as "spit

curls." A quick rub with a red silk ribbon, a hasty squirting of Coty's "L'Origan," and I was ready, I felt, for a thousand Garrisons and all the girls of Wellesley College.

Papa was to drive me to the party. When he saw me, he whistled. "Why, Gness," he said gently, "you are a grownup lady this night."

"Do I look pretty, Papa?"

He smiled. "You look most interesting," he said.

"Do you think I will ever look pretty, Papa? I'd rather look pretty than 'interesting,'" I cried, afraid of his answer, for Papa never lied.

"Do you feel pretty?" Papa said.

"Yes, Papa."

"Then you are pretty. You see, my dear, it is hard for me to say. You always look the same to your papa, nice and sweet."

The others were all there when I got to the Garrisons'. The house looked even bigger and grander inside than out, and when Allan came into the hall to greet me, he seemed a stranger. He took me over to his mother and she said, "Hello, it was nice you could come," and then he introduced me to some of the older people sitting around and those of the young people I didn't know. I was glad to see Larry there, for he was familiar with these smooth people but also my good friend.

I saw at once that I wasn't dressed like the other girls, who looked cool and comfortable in bright, springy dresses and with their hair cut short. When I saw Joan Drake, my heart sank. She wasn't pretty, not really pretty, but everything was so right about her. There were no braces on her large, very white, even teeth, and the few freckles I could discover gave her a nice outdoors look. She looked as if she were accustomed to doing all the things I

longed to and could not—swim well and ride a horse and play tennis in a short white dress. She had a high-pitched girlish voice and a giggle I thought very silly, but still it was charming.

Nearly all the young people gathered in the room off the living room where there was a piano and a punch bowl. Allan was very busy, circulating among his guests, and after I had been sitting alone for a while, Larry came over and said, "Why don't you play something on the piano, Gness?"

"All right," I said.

I had recently composed words to Massenet's "Elegy." I played it and sang it often at home, thinking of Allan, and now that melancholy song was the first thing that popped into my head. When I sat down at the piano, a cluster of boys and girls gathered around me. I sang my song to a suddenly stilled room and when it was over there was a polite patter of hands and my audience left the piano quickly, as if they were afraid I might play some more. I wondered if I had played or sung badly. Larry filled in the painful silence with a masterful rendering of "Kitten on the Keys" and they came back.

Someone said, "Come on, Joan, you play."

She played for a long time, popular pieces I didn't know. Everyone hung over the piano and sang and kept asking her to play more until she threw up her hands prettily, saying, "No. I want some punch."

Allan and several other boys fell all over themselves trying to be the first to get the punch for her. I felt thirsty, too, and after a while I asked Larry if he would go to the punchbowl with me, as I was embarrassed to go alone.

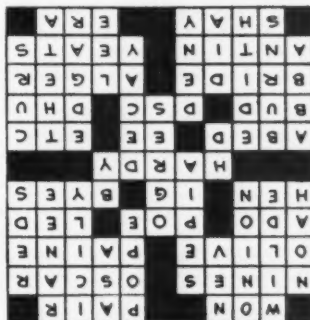
No one was rude to me; no one said anything unkind. But they all spoke a foreign language. Things I'd never heard about—sororities and fraternities and a kind of slick patter about places and games and things. I felt like a very old lady, an ancient in a shawl, full of a wisdom they would perhaps never know, and as painfully ignorant of the things that were important to them. Except for Larry, they all, even Allan, left me almost alone.

There was one young man in the group who seemed as apart from the others as I. His aloneness was plainly, however, deliberate. He was a senior in college, very grownup, consciously aloof from all these youngsters. I thought him very handsome. I kept looking at him and after a while he came over. Almost the first thing he said was, "Let's step out on the porch and look at the moon."

"Oh, yes!" I said.

We went out of the French doors

#### Crossword Puzzle Answer



Sure, you can turn this upside down if you want to. But why peek and spoil your fun? Puzzle is on inside back cover of this issue.

which opened from the music room onto a little balcony, and we stood there looking at the night.

"What's your name, baby?" he said.

"Gnessia Rodan," I said.

"Oh," he said. "Now I know—you're the little girl Aunt Mildred's worried about."

Aunt Mildred — that was Allan's mother. "Worrying about me?" wonderingly.

He grinned. "Well, offhand I'd say she had something to worry about. You're a little honey, baby."

I knew it was an insult, but I did not yet get the full impact.

"If you ask me, you're too good for that spindle-shanked Allan of hers. Come here, honey, give your uncle Tom a nice big kiss."

"Oh, no," I said, feeling trapped on the little balcony with the gay sounds of the others inside.

"Who're you kidding? Commerel!" He kissed me and all of a sudden my fear turned to burning anger.

"You *mouzhik!*" I cried. "You dirty *mouzhik!*" And without thinking, acting almost automatically, I kicked him.

He sat down hard on the stone floor of the balcony and I thought I had killed him. Dashing wildly through the rooms, I halted at the bridge table where Allan's mother sat. "Go get your nephew on the balcony," I said, deadly calm, though I was shaking inside. "I think I have killed him," I explained to the horrified silence, not realizing what I was saying, knowing only that his kiss had taken something I prized from me.

Allan's mother shrieked. The room and everyone went into a hubbub, and I left, banging the door hard after me.

Allan's cousin did not, of course, die. But Allan's and my love affair did. I saw him the Monday after the party, when school started again. There was a great coldness between us. Neither of us said anything about the party or my actions.

"Meet me in front of the libe at eight o'clock," I said.

"I don't think I can," he said, not looking at me.

"You'd better come," I said, "it's important—and I won't ask you to do anything ever again."

I was afraid he wouldn't be there, but he was, sullen and very quiet. We walked into the shadows of the building.

"I only want to kiss you good-bye, Allan," I said, trying not to cry, for I was very sad.

"I don't care whether you do or not," he said.

"Well, I do," I said.

I will kiss him, I thought, so he will not forget the little foreign girl who is

funny and noisy and not good enough for him and his mother. In all my commonness, I will kiss him uncommon good, so he will remember and think he has missed something wonderful.

And I did. I kissed him to make up for all the years I had longed to and all the dreams I had dreamed of him. "Good-bye, Allan," I said.

And I knew deeply that it did not have to be good-bye. It could be a beginning, but not a proud and lovely one.

"Goodbye forever," I said, and this was my heartbreak and my pride.

### The Honor Roll

When the aunts from Milwaukee arrived Sunday night, practically all of the immediate family was there to celebrate my commencement the following Tuesday. Cousin Mischa said it was extremely bourgeois to make such a fuss over the completion of a prescribed course of study. But he had chipped in with his share when they all bought me a small but fine string of real pearls. I was the first of all my family to be graduated from an American high school, and truly it was a great occasion.

"It is too bad she is not the highest in her class," said Olga, ever the crapehanger. "How does it happen?"

"Who says she is not the highest in her class?" Uncle Sascha cried excitedly.

"I am not," I said.

"Listen, all!" Cousin Mischa took the floor. It was plain to see a speech was coming. "Listen, it is clear she is not honored because she is the daughter of a proletarian. Tcha! These petty bourgeois."

"But I am on the honor roll," I cried, thankful now that I had squeezed in by the narrowest margin.

Mischa didn't hear me, however, for Papa was shouting, "I am not a proletarian. I am a businessman and a very good one—don't you forget that, Mischa! Also, I am a Republican, and don't you forget that."

"Uncle Rodan," Mischa said politely, in a very soft tone, "listen, it is no insult to be called a proletarian. As a matter of fact, it is a great honor."

"Very good then," Papa said. "I give you the honor. You may be the proletarian in this family."

"I am of the intelligentsia, Uncle. I live by my brains, not my hands."

"You see," Papa cried triumphantly, "he loves the workingman so much, yet he does not wish to be called one. A fine business."

We ate an early supper, all of us already dressed in our graduation clothes. For I was not graduating alone. Papa and

Mama, the aunts and the uncles, even Cousin Mischa, were going through with me what had now begun to seem an ordeal. Maryusha looks so foreign, I thought, with her shiny black hair and all her jewelry. One string of beads looks like a whole jewelry counter on my aunts, I thought—they were so flashing in themselves, with their shining eyes and much smiling. We are only a few, I thought, but we will fill the auditorium. Everyone will look at us. Mr. and Mrs. Garrison—how coolly they will sit; how correct they will appear. And even the mothers and fathers of the poor students—they will be quiet, and scared, maybe, but inconspicuous. Mine will be happy all over the place, I thought dismally. Papa will see someone across the auditorium and if he feels like it he will yell, "Appy Days!" Well, I thought savagely, no one had better laugh at my relatives.

Then I was on the platform looking out at the people of our town. Looking out on the hundreds of faces, I saw at once the row of my people. I am far from them now, I thought, gazing at them coolly, as if I were a stranger. There was Mama, so pretty, like a czarina; and Papa, dear Papa, bigger than anyone else and so proud of his daughter Gness that I suddenly wanted to comfort him for what I was and what I was not. There they were, the relatives and friends of my life, for all those who were not there were somehow also present.

Mr. Bleek, our principal, was making a speech. I looked over at Allan, sitting not far from me. I caught his look and a great pride came over me. Poor Allan, I thought; he lives in a narrow place created for him by his cold mother and sharp father, and he is only just big enough to know there are fine places outside the narrow confines of his life.

My string of pearls was a living thing around my neck and though it did not look different from dollar ones, I knew it was real and that many small sacrifices had been made that I might wear real pearls as a symbol of something important on my graduation night.

It is a marvelous thing, I thought, to be happy and to know you are happy. It is better to be a little happy and know it than to experience great happiness and not recognize it until it is only a memory. Sitting there in my white dress and real pearls, my hair in the regal coronet Mama had arranged so lovingly, seeing only the proud faces of my people, my fears and shame were lifted from me forever.

"Forgive, forgive me," I cried silently to them all. "Forgive me for many things. I'm sorry I didn't know how marvelous you all are."

# What Do You Remember?

## A Quiz Based on the Contents of This Issue

### Of Toothbrushes and Scalp Tonic

H. Allen Smith's tour of some of the places where practical jokes have been played reads like a travelogue. Write the letter of the place opposite the number of the joke.

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 1. cottage-pudding scalp tonic                  | a. Denver    |
| 2. a different kind of spaghetti party          | b. London    |
| 3. the changeable turtle                        | c. Hollywood |
| 4. one drugstore that didn't carry toothbrushes | d. Paris     |
|   | e. Rome      |

### Footnote to American History

A painless follow-up to the study of American history is Roderick Lull's story of an indomitable old pioneer. Without recourse to your history text, you should be able to give the "facts in the case." Fill the blanks with the missing word or words.

- This is the story of the narrator's \_\_\_\_\_.
- George Hanford was an adventurous young man who grew bored with the quiet life in his home state of \_\_\_\_\_.
- A pep talk—so he says—by a dead pioneer makes him decide to go prospecting in the \_\_\_\_\_.

- Most high school pupils know that this rich deposit of precious metals was located in Western \_\_\_\_\_.
- Hanford leaves home with \_\_\_\_\_ dollars.
- He returns broke, and marries \_\_\_\_\_, the girl he left behind.
- Years later, another apparition from the past persuades him to join the homesteaders in their trek to the \_\_\_\_\_.
- With his family, he weathers the infamous "\_\_\_\_\_ year" and becomes "as rich as he ever wanted to be."

### The Thread That Runs So True

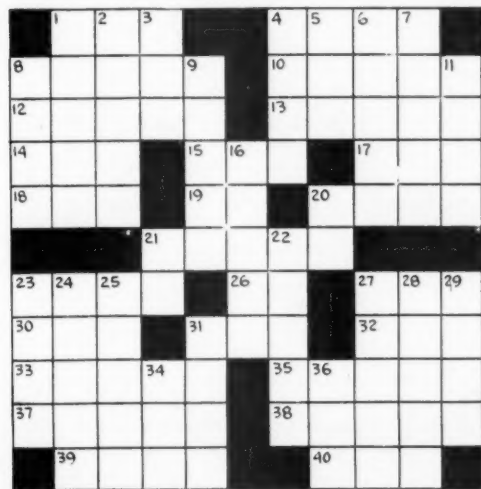
Do you still think teachers have a soft time of it? Then read the rest of Jesse Stuart's fascinating book about his early experiences in the profession. But first test your recall of this selection with the following choice questions. Place a check opposite the letter of the correct answer.

- Jesse Stuart becomes Lonesome Valley's only teacher when he's not quite \_\_\_\_\_  
 a. eighteen  
 b. seventeen  
 c. twenty-one
- He has a score to even, because his sister was \_\_\_\_\_  
 a. beaten up by Guy Hawkins  
 b. run out of Lonesome Valley by the townspeople  
 c. fired by the local school board
- The title of the book was inspired by \_\_\_\_\_  
 a. a game that's played in the schoolyard at Lonesome Valley  
 b. the author's reverence for the teaching profession  
 c. the stubborn independence of the people in Lonesome Valley

### Answers in Teacher Lesson Plan

## Gallery of Famous Authors

● There are 48 words in this puzzle. The words starred with an asterisk (\*) are taken from the names of well-known authors. See how many of these starred words you can get. Allow yourself two points for each starred word (there are 15) and two points for each of the others. If you get all the starred words, give yourself a bonus of four points for a total score of 100. Answers are on page 31, but don't look now and spoil your fun.



### ACROSS

- Triumphed.
- Two of a like kind.
- Baseball teams.
- \*First name of 1 Down; author of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.
- European tree whose fruit, green and bluish black, is widely used.
- \*American Revolutionary War pamphleteer.
- Shakespeare's *Much About Nothing*.
- \*Author of *The Gold Bug*; *Annabel Lee*.
- Conducted.
- This lays eggs.
- Abbrev. for the Army's Inspector General.
- In tennis, rounds in a tournament for which one has no opponent.
- \*Author of *The Return of the Native*.
- In bed.
- Abbrev. for Electrical Engineer.
- And so on (abbrev.)
- Sprout.
- Initials of the Distinguished Service Cross.
- Outlaw in *The Lady of the Lake* is Roderick \_\_\_\_\_.
- Woman to be married.
- \*Author of books with a "rags to riches" theme: Horatio \_\_\_\_\_, Jr.
- \*Mary \_\_\_\_\_; author of *The Promised Land*.
- \*Dean of Irish poets; William Butler \_\_\_\_\_.
- \*The Wonderful One-Hoss \_\_\_\_\_.
- Period of time.

### DOWN

- \*Last name of 10 Across; author of *Lady Windermere's Fan*.
- Vegetable that tastes fine with steak.
- Abbreviation for Nevada.
- \*English classical poet: *The Rape of the Lock*.
- Mother of Peer Gynt.
- Coldly.
- Wife of a rajah.
- \*American lexicographer: \_\_\_\_\_ Webster.
- Dark brown in color.
- Communists.
- Hideous persons.
- Near.
- \*American poetess who uses initials: Hilda Doolittle.
- Rot.
- Rhyme scheme of the first stanza of an Italian sonnet.
- \*Scottish poet; author of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*.
- \*\_\_\_\_\_ Wharton; author of *Ethan Frome*.
- \*First name of the author of *The Raven* (see 15 Across).
- Greek letter, equivalent of the English "th."
- Mongrel dogs.
- Contradict.
- Prefix meaning "through," as in \_\_\_\_\_ meter.
- \*Poet Edgar \_\_\_\_\_ Master: *The Spoon River Anthology*.

# Chucklebait



IN THE solemn huddles of statesmen and politicians, humor peeps up about as frequently as Jack Benny squanders a dime. Occasionally, however, something happens to short-circuit this high-powered thinking, and when it does, jokes become news.

Not so long ago, a verbal misunderstanding threw the discussions of a United Nations committee into an international tizzy. The debate was slipping slightly out of hand and the Soviet delegate pleaded with his colleagues. He spoke in Russian, of course, but his plea was translated into English as, "Gentlemen, let us not behave like a bull in a china shop!"

No Chinese interpreter was present that day, and the Chinese delegate was listening in English. He promptly raised his hand.

"Mr. Chairman," he said, "I should like the Soviet delegate to explain just what China has to do with his objections."

"Mr. Chairman," said the Russian, "I said nothing whatever about China. The Chinese delegate must have misunderstood."

"Mr. Chairman," said the Chinese delegate, "I distinctly heard my country mentioned. I request an explanation."

The confusion was finally straightened out, of course, and the honor of both countries preserved. However, a similar misunderstanding occurred not so long ago in (of all places) a Congressional committee.

## South Carolina versus South Carolina

John E. Peurifoy, the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration, is a native son of South Carolina. He's been in Washington a long time, though—since the days when he earned his living by shoveling snow from the steps of public buildings—and he has lost most of his once-rich South Carolina accent. In fact, he is understood by most Americans and even some Englishmen.

Once when Peurifoy was testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, a congressman from South

Carolina asked about career employees in the State Dept.

"What about careeah?" the congressman asked.

"Well," Peurifoy began, "you know we are pulling the Army out of Korea, and we'll have to send State Department people in."

The committee picked that one up the way a coon dog picks up a scent. One Ohio congressman whooped joyously, "Oh, boy, I've heard of Georgians who couldn't understand South Carolinians, but this is the first time I ever heard of two South Carolinians who couldn't understand each other."

Well, words can make a lot of trouble, as anyone knows who has tried to stack them so they make sense. Once the poet James Whitcomb Riley was complaining to a hostess about the poor prices that were being paid to authors.

The hostess appeared slightly nonplussed "But Mr. Riley," she exclaimed, "I understand you get a dollar a word for everything you write."

"That's true," drawled Riley, "but sometimes I sit all day and can't think of a single word."

Speaking of a dollar a word, it was rumored that Rudyard Kipling, the author of *Kim* (a forthcoming TAB Club selection.—No adv.) was being paid a dollar a word. Some wise guy mailed him a buck and asked for a sample.

Kipling wrote back: "Thanks."

Before we twist loose from this subject of words, during the height of Oscar Wilde's fame an American publishing firm cabled that they would give him \$50,000 for fifty thousand words.

Wilde wired back: "I don't know that many."

What words mean depends on how you use them. Once Daniel Boone was asked whether he had ever been lost in the woods. "Never got lost," replied Dan'l, "but I was once bewildered for three days."

## Mirror, Mirror on the Wall . . .

Then there is the story of the visitor to West Point who noticed that all the names engraved on a famous battle monument were those of men in the Union Army, killed in action during the Civil War. The visitor called to a passing cadet. "What is that monument?" he asked.

"That is a tribute to the marksmanship of the Confederacy, suh," drawled the cadet.

Well, there's nothing like a little self-esteem and certainly nothing like a lot of it. Oscar Wilde (again?) once said that self love is the beginning of a life-long infatuation or something like that. Anyway, there was once a Hollywood movie star who adored himself. The BIG moment of the day came when he read his fan mail.

One day he received a letter that was a pip.

"I think you're a great artist," this missive began, "a handsome man, and a person who will live long in the hearts of the American public. . . ." The letter went on that way for several pages. The actor lapped it up.

But the letter had a postscript: "Please excuse crayon, as they will not let me use anything sharp here."

